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THE
ASIATIC SCOIETY OF BOMBAY
Town Hall, Bombay.

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Photo. Hollyer.
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Dante's Dream (p. 16).
By D. G. Rossetti.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

Photo. Mansell.
Mrs. William Morris (p. 27).
By D. G. Rossetti.

THE influence of no other single British painter is so apparent in the art of our time—and not alone the British art—as that of the subject of this monograph, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. "I believe," said Ruskin, in the course of a lecture delivered shortly after the artist's death, "that Rossetti's name should be placed first on the list of men, within my own range of knowledge, who have raised and changed the spirit of modern art; raised in absolute attainment, changed in direction of temper."

And certainly the most cursory glance at the work of the average "early Victorian" painter—a stroll through the Vernon Collection at the Tate Gallery, for instance—is sufficient proof that there was much room for improvement in the spirit, at any rate, which animated this sphere of art in the early days of Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelite movement. The principal object of the majority of these painters appears to have been the apotheosis and the reiteration of the commonplace, their chief characteristic utter lack of originality or imagination. The eternal "sea-pieces" and "cattle-pieces," and "fruit-pieces" and "family-pieces," as Ruskin has put it, leave us, or we leave them, with that tired and dissatisfied feeling produced by the contemplation of decadent art—I use the word in its literal sense, with no moral, or immoral, *sous-entendu*. There is something so helplessly inane and artificial in the art of this period that one feels that some form of revolution was inevitable to destroy it, even as that great cyclone, the French Revolution, swept away the dense clouds of artificiality in social life which preceded it.

Photo. Mansell.
The Girlhood of Mary Virgin (p. 6).
By D. G. Rossetti.

Curiously

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enough, throughout the whole history of art as known to us, from the Byzantines and early Italian painters until our own times, it has periodically required some man of genius, or some small group of men, to rise up and rediscover Nature, that apparently self-evident fact, from where it lay buried and forgotten by the artists. It requires from time to time the eyes of a genius to penetrate the mists of artificiality which obscure the vision of his fellow-mortals. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century the small band of Pre-Raphaelites, with Rossetti as leader among them, rendered once more this very necessary service to art.

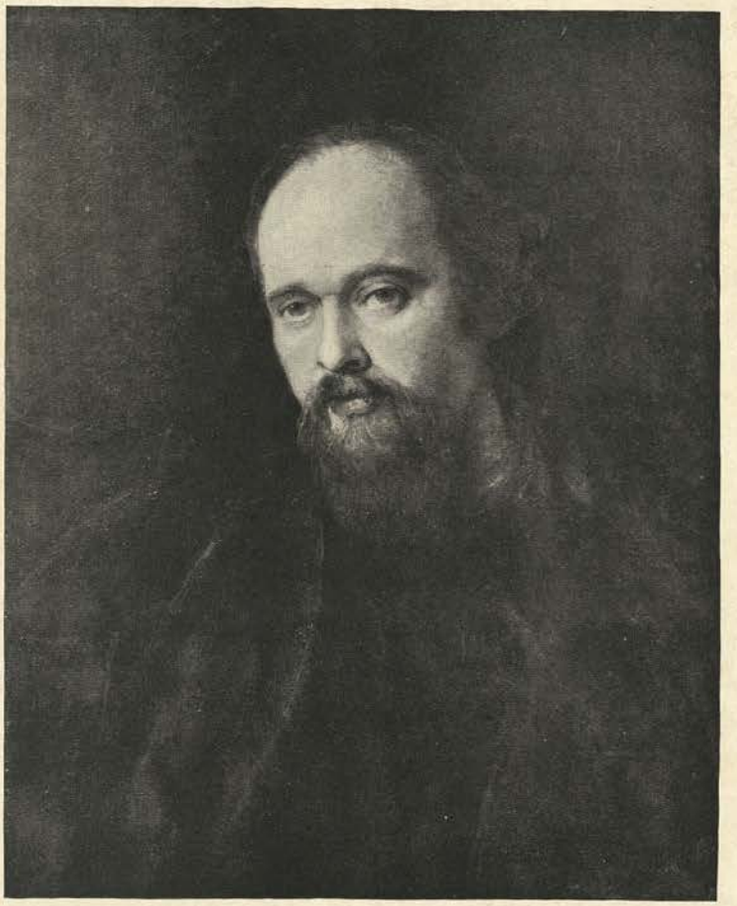


Photo. Hollyer. *Portrait of D. G. Rossetti. By G. F. Watts, R.A.*

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, or, as he was christened, Gabriel Charles Dante, was the first son of Gabriele Rossetti, the Abruzzese anti-despotic poet and commentator of Dante. His mother was the daughter of Gaetano Polidori, a Florentine professor and man of letters, and of an English lady whose maiden name was Pierce. Thus Dante Gabriel was by birth three-quarters Italian; and indeed we can see little of the Anglo-Saxon spirit in his works, though he had in private life a decided partiality for England and things English. He was born on the 12th May, 1828, being the second of Gabriele Rossetti's children.

It is not within my scope to say much here concerning the family or private life of Rossetti, but it is interesting to note that, whereas so many artists and writers have started life heavily handicapped by their families and domestic relations, the early surroundings of Dante were in every way calculated to encourage and foster the development of his intellectual powers. There was no flavour of vulgarity or petty-mindedness in the modest Charlotte Street household, and from their earliest years Mrs. Rossetti, who attended to the elementary education of her children, accustomed them to pursuits of an intelligent and elevated kind. Thus we learn that at the age of five little Dante enjoyed Hamlet, and before he was ten he and his brother had read much of Shakespeare, Faust, Walter Scott, and the Arabian Nights.

From his very earliest years Dante Gabriel showed a taste for drawing, and it was always an understood and accepted fact in the family circle that he would be an artist when he grew up.

The artistic training which he received was of a very limited nature, which circumstance partly accounts for two phenomena connected with his art—the somewhat defective technique noticeable in some of his works, and the strong

Rossetti's Father (p. 26). *By D. G. Rossetti.*

Photo. Mansell. *Christina Rossetti (p. 26).* *By D. G. Rossetti.*

Tate Gallery.

The Annunciation ("Ecce Ancilla Domini") (p. 6).
By D. G. Rossetti.

From the picture in the Collection of Fairfax Murray, Esq.

Dr. Johnson at the Mitre (p. 9).
By D. G. Rossetti.

stamp of individuality, uninfluenced by any school whatsoever, but due entirely to himself, his own taste and imagination, which so distinctly characterises them all.

Towards the end of 1841, when aged thirteen and some months, he left King's College, where his father was professor of Italian, and bade good-bye to regular schooling for good, entering Sass's Academy, a class for drawing which was conducted by Mr. F. S. Cary, a son, as it happened, of the translator of Dante. Here he remained about four years, proceeding thence to the Antique School of the Royal Academy, where his art studies proceeded for another two years. He made no very conspicuous progress and was never promoted to the life class.

The fact is that Rossetti's was a nature and an intellect which could gain little from outside influence—to his detriment as a painter in some respects, to his inestimable gain as an artist in the broader sense. He was impatient of the slow routine of regular learning; his hand craved to follow the more rapid impetus of his mind. The tedium of copying casts and studying perspective was well-nigh intolerable to this youth, whose ambition already urged him to enter the domain of serious art and to depict lofty, intellectual subjects.

Thus in 1848, dissatisfied with the slow progress he was making at the Academy School, we find him writing to Madox Brown the now-famous letter which initiated his artistic connection and life-long friendship with the great historical painter. Dante did not continue for very long, however, any regular course of study under Madox Brown, finding the fixed discipline here, as elsewhere, irksome. He wished to paint pictures, not to labour at copying casts or the "pickle jars" which, according to tradition, Madox Brown set him to depict by way of practice.

And here, before turning to Rossetti's first picture, I may mention that I propose in the course of this paper to pay attention to grouping of subject-matter rather than to strict sequence of date in dealing with his work.

Mary Magdalen at the door of Simon the Pharisee (p. 6).
By D. G. Rossetti.

ROYAL ASIA

From the picture in the Collection of Fairfax Murray, Esq.

"Found" (p. 9.) By D. G. Rossetti.

virtues. Rossetti's sonnet, "Mary's Girlhood," was written for this picture:—

"This is that blessed Mary, pre-elect
God's Virgin. Gone is a great while and she
Dwelt young in Nazareth of Galilee.
Unto God's will she brought devout respect,
Profound simplicity of intellect,
And supreme patience: from her mother's knee
Faithful and hopeful; wise in charity;
Strong in grave peace; in pity circumspect.

"So held she through her girlhood; as it were
An angel-watered lily that near God
Grows and is quiet; 'till, one dawn at home
She woke in her white bed, and had no fear
At all—yet wept till sunshine, and felt awed:
Because the fulness of the time was come."

Rossetti was never either a believing or a professing Christian, but this early picture, like all his later ones dealing with religious subjects, is sympathetic, indeed reverent, in tone—not the work of a materialist entirely out of all sympathy with, or understanding of, religious or spiritual sentiments. The same may be said of the 'Ecce Ancilla Domini,' now in our National (Tate) Gallery, and of the 'Magdalen at the door of Simon' of much later date.

The female members of Rossetti's family — his mother and sisters Christina and Maria more especially — were devoutly religious, and Dante had from childhood been brought up in the Christian (Protestant) faith. Thus, although with years of discretion he developed into a sceptic on questions of religion, and never had one single element of the pastor in his entire constitution, it is only natural that, both in his poetry and his paintings, he should always have treated religious subjects in an elevated and reverent spirit.

At the Academy School Rossetti had made the acquaintance of Holman Hunt, and on leaving Madox Brown's studio he removed his paints and other artistic impedimenta to Cleveland Street, where amid somewhat dismal surroundings he shared a studio with his young fellow-student, now already an exhibiting artist of some note, and proceeded almost straight away to paint his first picture, 'The Girlhood of Mary Virgin' (p. 1).

This now-famous picture is so intimately connected with the beginning of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, and so original in style and spirit, besides being the first important work by Rossetti (it was preceded by a small oil portrait of his sister Christina), that it deserves more than passing mention.

The Virgin is represented seated beside her mother at an embroidery frame, a simple, austere, virginal figure for whom sat the artist's sister Christina. Needle in hand, she pauses at her work and gazes, rapt in thought, at a little angel who stands beside a tall white lily. Outside the window of the room where the Virgin and her mother are seated stands St. Joachim, her father, tending a vine, the young tendrils of which are symbolically trained to form a cross. The picture is, indeed, full of such symbolical touches—strips of palm and seven-thorned briar lie on the floor, and underneath the jar where grows the lily are six large books whose bindings bear the names of the six cardinal

In the 'Ecce Ancilla Domini' (p. 3), strikingly original as this new treatment of the oft-depicted subject is, there is no flavour of narrow-minded materialism, no note that could jar on the most sensitively religious mind. The Virgin — here again painted from Christina, whose spiritual, Madonna-like face rendered her a perfect model for such a picture—is just aroused from slumber; half rising from her couch, she gazes with something at once of awe and of serenity in her face, at the approaching messenger. There is little colour in the picture. The Virgin and the angel are clad in white, the angel holds a white lily in his hand, the walls and the couch are white, almost the only colour in the whole canvas being the deep blue of the oriental sky, seen through a window, and a blue drapery behind the Virgin's head.

This picture, for some reason well-nigh incomprehensible to us to-day, aroused, along with other Pre-Raphaelite pictures exhibited the same year, a perfect tempest of abuse, and remained long unsold in the artist's studio—"a blessed white eye-sore" to the impecunious youth.

In Rossetti's other great religious picture, 'Mary Magdalen at the door of Simon the Pharisee' (p. 5), the

Photo. Mansell.

Hesterna Rosa (p. 9).
By D. G. Rossetti

Magdalen is represented surrounded by a company of fellow-revellers about to repair to a neighbouring feast, at the moment when she beholds the head of Christ through the open window of Simon's house. "And behold a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment." Her lovers and companions surround her, and seek to deter her with prayers and jibes, but blind and deaf to their appeals, her eyes fixed on the Christ's face, she sees Him alone, and tears from her brow the garlands of roses which adorned it. Simon, from within, looks disdainfully at Mary Magdalen, and a servant, knowing her, smiles at her approach. Christ looks towards her and waits. Rossetti wrote one of his finest sonnets for this picture, of which these lines are the final sestet:—

> "Oh, loose me! Seest thou not my bridegroom's face
> That draws me to Him? For His feet my kiss,
> My hair, my tears He craves to-day:—and oh!
> What words can tell what other day and place
> Shall see me clasp those blood-stained feet of His?
> He needs me, calls me, loves me; let me go!"

The most important version of this picture, in pen and ink, was begun by Rossetti in 1853, and terminated in 1858, but the original idea of the picture was of earlier date.

Besides these Rossetti painted various other religious subjects during the course of his life, and notably some very fine designs for stained glass for the Morris firm, remarkable for their vigour, ingenuity of design, and admirable simplicity of line—this latter quality so essential in stained glass, mosaic, etc., and so little understood by modern artists. 'The Seed of David,' a triptych oil-painting in the Llandaff Cathedral, and the 'Parable of the Vineyard' and 'St. George and the Dragon' series in stained glass deserve special mention.

II.—The Pre-Raphaelite Movement.

WE left Rossetti painting 'The Girlhood of Mary Virgin' in Holman Hunt's studio on the very verge, or more correctly in the full current, of the much talked and written about and much criticised Pre-Raphaelite movement.

So much, indeed, has already been written and said of late years on this subject, that one naturally feels some reluctance in broaching it again, but to write about Rossetti without devoting a little space to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood would not be possible, and so I will say a few words on the subject, and then pass on.

1848 was, *par excellence*, a year of revolution and innovation; and while Dante's father, the exiled Italian patriot, was anxiously watching for some change in the political conditions of Italy which might enable him to return, the son, who never took any interest in political or social questions, was, in conjunction with a few other youths of genius and initiative, inaugurating the most formidable revolt against accepted conventions in the world of art which the nineteenth century witnessed. When I say the most formidable I do not by any means forget that other movement which has exercised so marked and so wide-spread an influence on modern painting—the Impressionist. Three new influences, indeed, are paramount in the art of the latter half of last century—the Pre-Raphaelite, Impressionism, and the Japanese. But apart from the fact that the Pre-Raphaelite was the first of these movements, and thus in a certain measure prepared the ground for the others

Photo. Mansell.

Washing Hands (p. 9).
By D. G. Rossetti.

—for it is the first steps on the path of innovations which are the hardest to make—I consider that it was also the most important intrinsically, and the most far-reaching in its effects.

Dante Gabriel and his brother William Michael Rossetti, Holman Hunt, Millais, F. G. Stephens, James Collinson, and Thomas Woolner the sculptor, such were the names of the youths—the eldest of them under twenty-four years of age—who banded together in open revolt against worn-out laws and traditions in art under the title of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Ford Madox Brown, their senior by a few years, though he never actually enrolled himself as a member of the Brotherhood, was an earnest sympathiser, partly a precursor, partly a convert.

Which of the three prime movers in the Brotherhood—Rossetti, Holman Hunt, or Millais—was responsible for the first definite suggestion of such an association it would be difficult to say. All three were equally essential to it, and probably have equal claims to its foundation. Millais and Hunt were undoubtedly the more competent painters at that time, and Hunt, as his works throughout his career prove, was a most earnest and strenuous seeker after truth and nature, a man of determination and of intellect. In these latter respects Millais was at this period undoubtedly considerably under the influence of his young *confrères*, as is shown by the deterioration in subject-matter which his later work displays. Of the three, Rossetti possessed the richest imagination, the greatest creative power, and being the most headstrong and impetuous of the set, probably went farther than the others in urging that such a body should be formed under the name Pre-Raphaelite.

To this generation, who, by means of picture galleries and innumerable publications, photographs, and reproductions of all kinds, are more or less well acquainted with the works of the early Italian painters, and to whom the names of Giotto, Botticelli, Fra Angelico and Filippino Lippi are familiar as household words, it is difficult to realise how little a youth like Rossetti or any of his associates (who at the date of the formation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood had never been outside this country) could know about the painters who preceded Raphael. Our National Gallery was at that time a very different thing from what it now is, and Rossetti could hardly be acquainted with the works of the early Italians further than through Lasinio's engravings from the frescoes in the Campo Santo in Pisa (some by Benozzo Gozzoli, Orcagna, a few things attributed to Giotto, etc.); two pictures by Francia, some specimens of Gaddo Gaddi, and the little Perugino in the National Gallery; Mantegna's 'Triumph of Julius Cæsar'—the latter and the Perugino heartily despised by Rossetti, *entre parenthèses*—and casts of Ghiberti's famous gates of the Battisterio in Florence, which were tremendously admired by Rossetti and Holman Hunt. With the works of the non-Italian painters anterior to Raphael they were slightly acquainted, but not to any very considerable extent; the work of Van Eyck in our National Gallery was known to them and admired.

Their admiration for the Pre-Raphael painters was therefore inspired rather by their contempt and detestation of the pompous and stereotyped works of the painters who succeeded Raphael than by their absolute knowledge of the former; and there was something of the spirit of the famous "Gueux" in their adoption of a title which had been cast at them as a term of reproach.

Later writers—commencing with Ruskin and culminating in a book by an enthusiastic lady admirer—have been pleased to attribute all kinds of objects and "purposes" to the Brotherhood, and seem erroneously to imagine that the artists who formed it set themselves up as a sort of lay mission to their fellows. No greater mistake could be made. They were concerned with art, in a certain sense with the reform of art, not with morals. Their one great object, the most moral object indeed at which an artist can aim, was the painting of good pictures. A high intellectual standard in the choice of subject, individual freedom and non-subjection to academic laws in the treatment thereof, truth and fidelity to nature as regards execution—such, in a few words, were the main principles of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

And what is true of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood as a whole, is most signally true of Rossetti individually. He was essentially an artist and a poet, not a teacher of morals. He was a man of elevated intellect, far above the commonplaces of his time, and of poetic imagination, and this intellect and imagination he gave

Paolo and Francesca (see p. 13)

From the Picture in the Collection of Edmund Davis Esq.

out to the world in his paintings and his poetry. His paintings, though essentially beautiful, are never insipidly so—not mere prettiness with nothing more solid behind it. There is thought behind all, and poetry and imagination; in short, there is intellect. But with very few exceptions there is in his work no set moral purpose; Rossetti did not paint in order to preach some good lesson, religious or otherwise, to his contemporaries. The fact is, he paid but little heed to his contemporaries, and they entered very slightly into his calculations. He lived apart from them, and was little concerned with their desires or doings. He wrote and he painted the very best he had in him, and in this he conformed to the highest moral laws in so far as they concern the artist. He did not regard his pen or his brush in the light of a pulpit, after the manner of so many of his compatriots. Ever since Hogarth, the pioneer of English painters, who scourged with his brush the follies, frivolities, and vices of his times, there has been a strong tendency among English artists to extract sermons in stone or paint or other medium from their art. Rossetti was little concerned with the follies of his time, and he did not inveigh against them. He belonged to that race of men who leave cabmen to settle topographic difficulties, sermons to parsons, and painting to artists. He lived in an atmosphere of his own; belonged to himself and his art. He painted very few modern subjects, and lived rather in the Middle Ages than in the nineteenth century. And for this he paid the necessary penalty in being comparatively little known during his life, though much misunderstood and misrepresented.

One of the very few pictures from Rossetti's brush dealing with modern life, and touching on moral or social problems, is 'Found' (p. 6). This picture represents early dawn in a London street abutting on one of the bridges. A young drover from the country, while driving a calf to market, recognises in a fallen woman on the pavement his former sweetheart. He tries to raise her from where she crouches on the ground, but with closed eyes she turns her face from him to the wall. The woman's face is full of expression and pathos, a face with much of beauty in it, but worn and bearing the traces of vice and suffering. Under the earlier pen-and-ink version of this picture is inscribed in Rossetti's hand this verse from Jeremiah, "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thy betrothal." Rossetti also wrote a very fine sonnet, which we give below:—

"There is a budding morrow in midnight,
So sang our Keats, our English nightingale—
And here as lamps across the bridge turn pale
In London's smokeless resurrection-light,
Dark breaks to dawn. But o'er the deadly blight
Of love deflowered and sorrow of none avail,
Which makes this man gasp and this woman quail,
Can day from darkness ever again take flight?

Ah, gave not these two hearts their mutual pledge
Under one mantle sheltered 'neath the hedge
In gloaming courtship? And, O God! to-day
He only knows he holds her;—but what part
Can life take now? She cries in her locked heart,
'Leave me—I do not know you—go away!'"

'Found,' like many of Rossetti's pictures, went through numerous vicissitudes. It was commenced in 1853, commissioned by several would-be purchasers, but never finished. Two pen-and-ink versions and various studies for it exist.

An early design, 'Hesterna Rosa' (p. 7) deals with somewhat the same theme. This is founded on Elena's song in Sir Henry Taylor's "Philip van Artevelde":—

"Quoth tongue of neither maid nor wife,
To heart of neither wife nor maid,
'Lead we not here a merry life
Betwixt the shine and shade?'
Quoth heart of neither maid nor wife
To tongue of neither wife nor maid,
'Thou wag'st; but I am sore with strife,
And feel like flowers that fade.'"

The design represents the inside of a tent or cabin after a night's revelry, at the hour of early dawn. Two men are playing dice, with their mistresses, vine-garlanded, close by, one singing with her arms round her lover's neck, the other, the *hesterna rosa*, in a sadder mood, hides her face in her hand. A child, close by, plays a lute, while an ape, suggestive of the baser side of life, scratches himself in another corner.

With the exception of 'Found' Rossetti painted no large modern picture of great importance—indeed very few modern subjects seem to have appealed to him at all. 'Dr. Johnson with the would-be Methodists at the Mitre' (p. 4) is a delightfully unexpected little drawing executed in Paris in 1860, the year of his marriage to Lizzie Siddal. The incident is taken from "Boswell's Life of Johnson," and represents a little tea scene at the "Mitre," whither Johnson had invited two young ladies who desired to discuss Methodism with the learned doctor. He has taken one of them, an especially demure-looking young lady, on his knee, no doubt in order to elucidate with greater emphasis some knotty theological point. The figures of Johnson and Boswell—historically Maxwell, not Boswell, should have been the fourth—are excellent specimens of portraiture. This theological discussion has evidently proved of an absorbing nature, for a waiter comes down to extinguish the lantern, as though to suggest to the quartette that the hour is advanced.

'Washing Hands' (p. 8), a water-colour belonging to the year 1865, shares with the 'Found' and the 'Johnson' picture the distinction of being among the very few specimens of comparatively modern costume painted by Rossetti. It represents the last stage of an unlucky love-affair, and the lady is washing her hands of it and of her lover.

Photo. Mansell.

Sketch for 'Troy Town' (p. 17).
By D. G. Rossetti.

Photo. Mansell.

Dante drawing an Angel in memory of Beatrice (p. 10).
By D. G. Rossetti.

III.—Dante Subjects.

SOME of Rossetti's finest work—I think that I should not be far wrong in saying his finest—was produced under the influence of Dante's poetry. From their earliest infancy the Rossettis had grown up in a Dantesque atmosphere, one of the most familiar spectacles of their childhood being the figure of their father poring over the works of the great Florentine, writing notes and commentaries. Indeed, so heavy and musty were the volumes old Rossetti delighted in, so copious and minute his notes, that in early childhood the name of Dante Alighieri was rather a terror than a delight to his children—the "Convito" being regarded as the very essence of unreadable dulness. But as Gabriel and his brother and sisters grew up, they, too, were destined to fall under the spell of the divine poet, and to Dante Gabriel, both as painter and as poet, Alighieri was a never-failing source of inspiration. He was but little in sympathy with his father's theories and elaborate interpretations; the sublime poetry, the superhuman imagination which could grasp at once heaven and hell and the whole universe, appealed to him; he cared little about theological or astronomical discussions or disputes, nor did he trouble himself as to the precise circumstances under which Dante's stationary foot was always the lowest when ascending the mountain whence Virgil bade him retrace his steps, nor what that much-disputed mountain may have been.

Rossetti's earliest Dantesque design was a pen-and-ink drawing, very Pre-Raphaelite in style, representing Dante drawing an angel in memory of Beatrice—a subject taken from a passage in the "Vita Nuova," which I quote in Rossetti's own translation: "On that day which fulfilled the year since my lady had been made of the citizens of eternal life, remembering me of her as I sat alone, I betook myself to draw the resemblance of an angel upon certain tablets. And while I did thus, chancing to turn my head, I perceived that some were standing beside me to whom I should have given courteous welcome, and that they were observing what I did. Also I learned afterwards that they had been there awhile before I perceived them. Perceiving whom I arose for salutation and said, 'Another was with me.'"

The water-colour reproduced above, illustrating the same subject, is a quite different composition painted by Rossetti some years later, in 1853. This picture, apart from its intrinsic charm and interest, is memorable as being the first link in Rossetti's acquaintance and subsequent friendship with Ruskin. It was shown to the eminent critic by its purchaser, Mr. MacCracken, and was so greatly admired by him that he subsequently took measures to meet Rossetti. Ruskin remained for many years Rossetti's friend and the generous patron of his art, and entertained the warmest regard for him both as artist and man—a regard which Rossetti reciprocated, although with the passing of years and divers circumstances, the two men saw little of one another in later life.

In the initial Pre-Raphaelite year, 1848, Rossetti made the first pen-and-ink design for the beautiful diptych of the 'Salutation of Beatrice' (p. 12). The left compartment represents the 'Salutation on Earth'—in the streets of Florence—an incident described in the "Vita Nuova." The 'Salutation in Eden' is from the "Divina

From the picture in the Tate Gallery.

Beata Beatrix (p. 14).
By D. G. Rossetti

The Salutation of Beatrice (p. 10).
By D. G. Rossetti.

Commedia," and illustrates that wonderful passage in the "Purgatorio," beginning with the line, "Guardami ben, ben son, ben son Beatrice." We reproduce below a charcoal study drawn from Mrs. William Morris, which is, I think, the finest head ever drawn by Rossetti—indeed I know few heads by any painter of any nationality, ancient or modern, which can compare with this for absolute beauty. This study was made for the 'Salutation on Earth,' but so intense and spiritual is the expression that it recalls rather the Beatrice of the "Divine Comedy," the Beatrice who leads Dante higher and higher through the ascending spheres of Heaven, and in whose face Dante reads the reflection of Paradise—

"... Il piacere eterno,
che diretto
Raggiava in Beatrice,
dal bel viso
Mi contentava col se-
condo aspetto."

Head of Beatrice (p. 12).
By D. G. Rossetti.

The 'Dantis Amor' (p. 14) is a quaint design which Rossetti made some years later to form the centrepiece of a replica of the two 'Salutations,' which he executed for a cabinet for the Morris firm. It is a symbolical representation of the last line in the "Divine Comedy":

"L'Amor che muove il
sole e l'altre stelle."

To 1849, or a little later, also belongs a small water-colour illustrating a passage of the "Vita Nuova," which tells how Beatrice at a wedding feast denied Dante her salutation (p. 14). This, like all Rossetti's early water-colours, is charming and original in colour and design.

Another water-colour of early date (1852), not taken direct from Dante's poetry, but inspired by him, is 'Giotto painting Dante's Portrait,' a subject suggested by Dante's portrait by Giotto, then recently discovered in a

La Donna della Finestra (p. 16).
By D. G. Rossetti.

fresco in the Bargello by Gabriele Rossetti's old friend Barone Kirkup. Beyond this, however, the picture gives expression to a verse of the "Purgatorio" on the transitoriness of fame, in which Dante, according to some interpreters, foretells his own renown:

> "In painting Cimabue fancied he
> Possessed the field: now Giotto has the acclaim
> In such wise that it darkens *his* repute—
> So has one Guido from the other reft
> The glory of language: and he's born, perhaps,
> Who'll turn out of the nest the one and both."

Behind the seated figure of Dante stands Guido Cavalcanti, reading from a volume of the other Guido's poetry, while Cimabue, a person of obsolete aspect, gazes at Giotto as he paints.

The most beautiful of all Rossetti's early Dantesque water-colours is perhaps the 'Paolo and Francesca' (plate opposite p. 8) painted in 1861 for his patron Mr. Leathart, being a replica of the first compartment of a diptych of earlier date (1855). This beautiful little picture illustrates those wonderful lines in the fifth canto

of the "Inferno" in which Francesca tells Dante "in what manner love conceded that she first recognised her dubious desires."

Rossetti translated the lines to which this picture gives expression:

"One day we read for pastime and sweet cheer,
Of Lancelot, how he found love tyrannous:
We were alone and without any fear,
Our eyes were drawn together reading thus,
Full oft, and still our cheeks would pale and glow;
But one sole point it was that conquered us.
For when we read of that great lover how
He kissed the smile which he had longed to win—
Then he whom nought can sever from me now
For ever, kissed my mouth, all quivering."

From a Water-colour in the possession of H. T. Wells, R.A.

Beatrice denying her Salutation (p. 12).
By D. G. Rossetti.

There is all the passion and abandonment of that first unauthorised kiss in this wonderful little picture, which is one of the most exquisite things Rossetti painted.

In the second compartment of the earlier diptych the souls of the lovers are seen clasped together floating through Hell amid a tempest of flames. In the later triptych, reproduced here, Dante and Virgil are represented in a central compartment with the words "O lasso" inscribed between.

'The Boat of Love' illustrates a charming sonnet of Dante's addressed to Guido Cavalcanti, in which he expresses a desire that they two with their friend Lapo Gianni, and their respective ladies, might be conveyed over the seas in a barque, and "not talk of anything but love." This picture Rossetti took up late in life, but in style and spirit the design belongs rather to his earlier period.

Some of the greatest works of Rossetti's later period also draw their inspiration from Dante—the 'Beata Beatrix,' now in our National Gallery, the 'Dante's Dream,' in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, and 'La Donna della Finestra.'

The 'Beata Beatrix' (p. 11) was painted in memory of Rossetti's beloved wife—the Lizzie Siddal whose face appears in so many of his earlier canvases—and who so often, during her life, had sat for Beatrice. I quote below Rossetti's own description of this picture:—

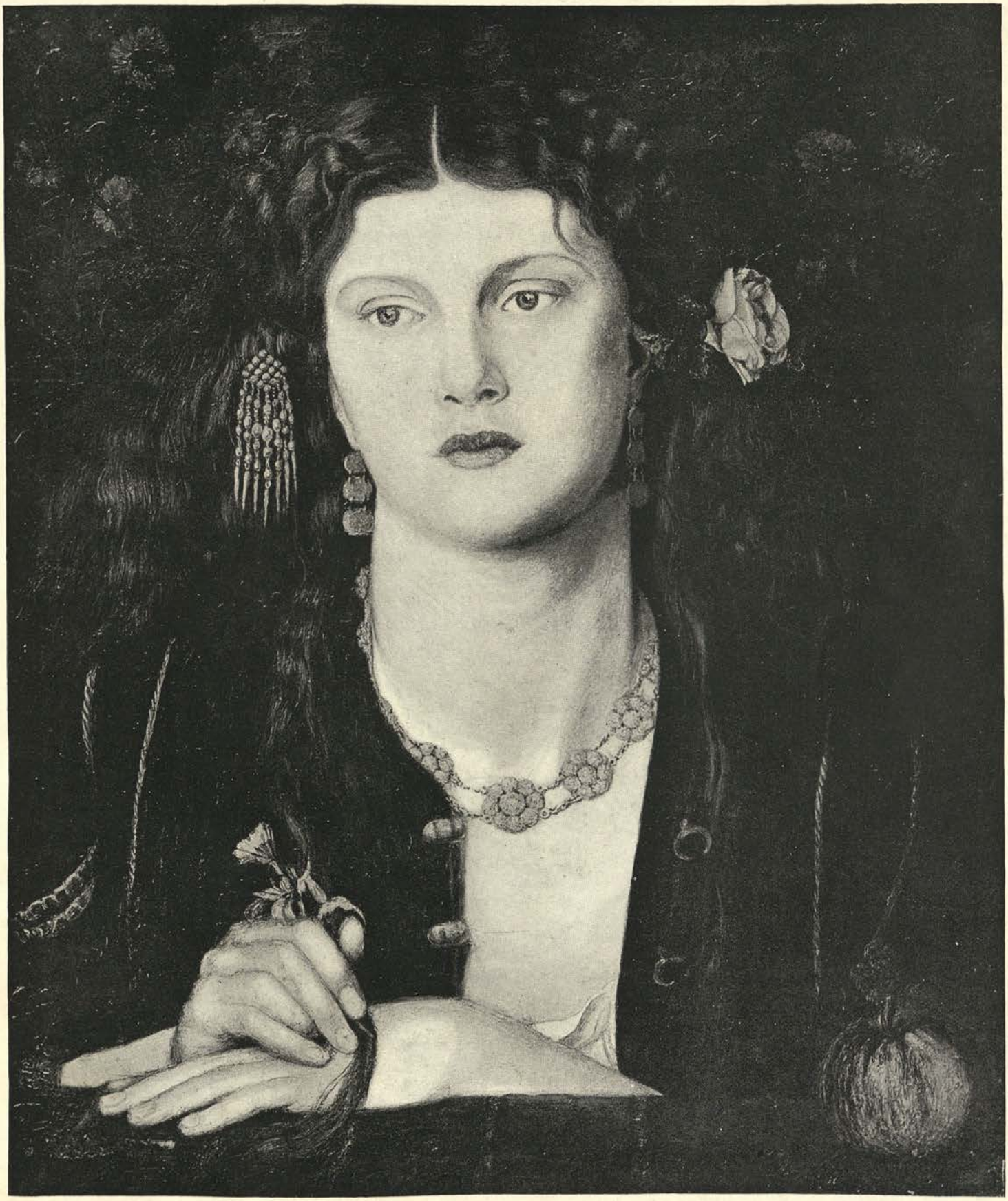
"The picture illustrates the 'Vita Nuova,' embodying symbolically the death of Beatrice as treated in that work. The picture is not intended at all to represent death, but to render it under the semblance of a trance in which Beatrice, seated at a balcony overlooking the city, is suddenly rapt from earth to heaven.

"You will remember how Dante dwells on the desolation of the city in

BENEDICTA
VI EST PER OMNIA SAECULA
IL SOLE E L'ALTRE STELLE
L'AMOR CHE MUOVE
QUELLA BEATA BEATRICE CHE MIRA CONTINUAMENTE NELLA FACCIA DI COLUI

From the picture in the Collection of Fairfax Murray, Esq.

Dantis Amor (p. 12).
By D. G. Rossetti.



From the picture in the Collection of Fairfax Murray, Esq.

Bocca Baciata (p. 28).
By D. G. Rossetti.

connection with the incident of her death, and for this reason I have introduced it as my background, and made the figures of Dante and Love, passing through the street and gazing ominously on one another, conscious of the event; while the bird, a messenger of death, drops the poppy between the hands of Beatrice. She, through her shut lids, is conscious of a new world, as expressed in the last words of the "Vita Nuova"—'That blessed Beatrice who now gazeth continually on His countenance *qui est per omnia sæcula benedictus.*'"

This picture of Beatrice in a trance, which immortalises Rossetti's wife in death, is one of his most perfect paintings: perfect in those qualities in which he excelled—poetry, colour, and human and spiritual beauty. There is not a single discordant note in the whole picture; all is in perfect harmony. In no painting that I know of is the repose of Death more beautifully symbolised—the rest from the trouble and tumult of human existence with nothing of the ugly physical side of death. We have the repose of Death with none of its horrors; and beyond its repose the Christian idea, as seen through Dante, of the beatitude of death for the blessed. Rossetti could pay no greater tribute to the memory of his wife, whose tragic death, two years after marriage, was a grievous blow to the artist. There is something in the spirit of the 'Beata Beatrix' which reminds me of the incident in the "Vita Nuova" of Dante drawing an angel in memory of Beatrice.

'Dante's Dream' (p. 1) likewise illustrates the "Vita Nuova." I quote the particular passage from Rossetti's translation—one of the very finest specimens of translation in the English language.

> "Then Love spoke thus: 'Now all shall be made clear;
> Come and behold our lady where she lies.'
> These idle phantasies
> Then carried me to see my lady dead:
> And standing at her head
> Her ladies put a white veil over her;
> And with her was such very humbleness
> That she appeared to say, 'I am at peace.'"

This verse describes the picture more clearly than any words I could add. Love, it will be seen, bends down to kiss the dead Beatrice, while Dante, whom he leads by the hand, grave and rapt in thought, stands by and gazes on. The picture is unfortunately much deteriorated from its original form by Rossetti having repainted the hair of Beatrice, from dark to yellow, at a later date.

Towards the close of the "Vita Nuova" Dante tells us how, on one occasion, being in great distress at the death of Beatrice, and fearing lest any should behold his forlorn condition, he chanced to raise his eyes, and beheld a young and beautiful lady who was gazing down on him from a window with a gaze full of pity. Dante addressed to this lady a sonnet beginning:

> "Love's pallor and the semblance of deep ruth
> Were never yet shown forth so perfectly
> In any lady's face, chancing to see
> Grief's miserable countenance uncouth,
> As in thine, lady, they have sprung to soothe,
> When in mine anguish thou hast looked on me,
> Until sometimes it seems as if through thee
> My heart might almost wander from its truth."

This incident is the subject of Rossetti's fine composition, 'La Donna della Finestra,' of which we reproduce a study belonging to 1870 (p. 13). The principal version of this picture was painted in 1879, but in my estimation the earlier study is the finer in expression.

IV.—Arthurian and other Pictures.

FROM Dante to Shakespeare seems a natural step, and we will now cast a glance at those pictures of Rossetti's which illustrate the works of the great English dramatist. To 1858 belongs a very fine design from Hamlet, representing the scene in Act III. where Ophelia returns the prince his letters (p. 16). The treatment of the subject is simple and dignified, and displays none of that theatrical turn so almost universally to be met with in pictures representing scenes taken, not from real life, but from the drama. Ophelia—a charming portrait of Miss Siddal—is seated in a quaint carved seat, which no one but Rossetti or Madox Brown could have invented, and with averted face she holds out to Hamlet the bundle of letters. In a letter to Professor Norton, Rossetti thus describes this picture: "The 'Hamlet and Ophelia' may need a word of comment. I mean him to be ramping about on the stalls of the little oratory turning out of the main hall, to which Ophelia has retired with the devotional book which her father gives her to read. He throws his arms wildly along the sill of the screen, and frays the roses to pieces as he talks, hardly knowing what he says. She still holds out to him the letters and jewels which she wishes to return, but has done speaking and lets him rave on. In the woodwork are symbols of rash introspection—the Tree of Knowledge, and the man who touched the Ark and died. The outer court is full of intricate stairs and passages, and leads to the ramparts where the ghost walks at night."

Rossetti, by the way, seems to have forgotten that some natural outlet should have been allowed for Hamlet's legs. The legs, however, are in no way essential to the scene, and we do very nicely without them. Hamlet

Photo. Mansell.

Hamlet and Ophelia (p. 16).
By D. G. Rossetti.

The Beloved (see p. 28)

is represented here youthful and grave, with none of that wild and fantastic *mise-en-scène* which both painters and actors who preceded Rossetti considered indispensable to him. Another version of the same subject of later date exists, a water-colour belonging to the year 1866. In this version Hamlet and Ophelia are standing, he holding her right hand in both his, she with averted face, and the casket of letters in front of her. In 1864 Rossetti painted a small water-colour which he named 'The First Madness of Ophelia.' It represents an incident which is not in the play, but which may be supposed likely, *i.e.*, the first symptoms of Ophelia's madness before the regular "mad scene." She is being led away by Horatio, not, as it has been erroneously stated, by Laertes, while the King and Queen stand by in silence.

To 1870 probably belongs the first design for the 'Death of Lady Macbeth' (see below). As a representation of the terrible in a dramatic form this design is almost unique from Rossetti. Lady Macbeth, in frantic terror of approaching death, is wildly rubbing her hands in a vain effort to erase the imaginary blood-stains. A physician bathes her head and attendants surround her. Another design, which shared with the 'Lady Macbeth' the not very rare distinction of never being executed as a picture, is 'Desdemona's Death Song' (p. 18), of which the principal design belongs mainly to 1878. Emilia is shown combing her unhappy mistress's hair while she sings her last earthly song.

From the picture in the Collection of Fairfax Murray, Esq.

The Question (p 18).
By D. G. Rossetti.

We have unfortunately but few designs or paintings of Rossetti's illustrative of ancient literature; the mediæval and romantic appealed to him rather than the classic. One of his noblest designs, however, is inspired by Homer; I refer to the 'Cassandra' (p. 19). The design will be best understood from Rossetti's description: "The incident is just before Hector's last battle. Cassandra has warned him in vain by her prophecies, and is now throwing herself against a pillar and rending her clothes in despair because he will not be detained longer. He is rushing down the steps and trying to make himself heard across her noise as he shouts an order to the officer in charge of the soldiers who are going round the ramparts on their way to battle. One of the captains is beckoning to him to make haste. Behind them is Andromache with their child, and a nurse who is holding the cradle. Helen is arming Paris in a leisurely way on a sofa; we may presume from her expression that Cassandra has not spared her in her denunciations. Paris is patting her on the back to soothe her, much amused; Priam and Hecuba are behind, the latter stopping her ears in horror. One brother is imploring Cassandra to desist from her fear-inspiring cries. The ramparts are lined with engines for casting stones on the besiegers."

Photo. Mansell.

The Death of Lady Macbeth (p. 17).
By D. G. Rossetti.

It is deeply to be regretted that divers circumstances—the taste of his purchasers among others—prevented Rossetti from ever executing this remarkably fine design in the form of a painting. For vigour of conception and execution, expression, grouping, and ardour of thought it is almost unique. The figure of Cassandra — like "a mountain-beast new-taken"—is powerful and tragic in the extreme. We might have expected Helen to be more absolutely beautiful, but it must be borne in mind that this is only a pen-and-ink design, and we cannot tell what Rossetti might have made of her in the finished picture.

Among the few other subjects taken from the store-house of ancient Greece and depicted — or rather projected — by Rossetti, are the 'Aspecta Medusa,' begun in 1865, and a small design, 'Troy Town'

Study for Desdemona's Death Song (p. 17).
By D. G. Rossetti.

(p. 9), illustrating his ballad bearing that name. These beginnings, like the 'Cassandra,' proved of an abortive nature so far as painting is concerned.

A large pencil drawing, 'The Question' (p. 17), represents Youth, Manhood and Old Age questioning the Sphinx, who, for all answer, stares blindly and unrelentingly into space. Youth, his question unanswered and perhaps unasked, falls back dead, and it is said that in this conception of Youth dying on the threshold of knowledge, Rossetti wished to symbolise the untimely death of the brilliantly-gifted son of his life-long friend, Ford Madox Brown.

As an almost unique study of the nude this is very interesting from Rossetti, the only other nude figure by him of which I am aware being a full-length black chalk figure representing the 'Spirit of the Rainbow.'

As I observed above, the mediæval and romantic appealed to Rossetti more strongly than aught else, at any rate in his earlier days. King Arthur and the Arthurian legends, which Madox Brown was, perhaps, the first to set going in artistic circles, was at one period a source of endless inspiration to Rossetti—an interest which he shared with Burne-Jones, William Morris, and others of that brilliant circle with whom he first became acquainted towards the end of 1855.

Gabriel Rossetti and his brother had from boyhood been acquainted with Malory's 'Morte d'Arthur,' and to 1854 belongs a curious little Pre-Raphaelite water-colour, 'King Arthur's Tomb,' the idea of which is due, I believe, rather to Rossetti's imagination than to any definite incident in Malory. Guenevere is praying alone at a memorial tomb which she has erected to Arthur in the grounds of the convent of which she has, since her separation from him, become prioress. Here Lancelot seeks her out and would fain renew with a kiss the memory of their olden love, but Guenevere, grown older and repentant, refuses.

Among Rossetti's charming illustrations for the "Moxon's Tennyson" (1856), is one of Sir Galahad in quest of the Sanc Grael, stopping at a wayside chapel to quench his thirst with water; and to 1857, the year of the famous Oxford fresco undertaking, belongs, among a number of small water-colours, mostly very mediæval in tone, an Arthurian drawing, the 'Damsel of the Sanc Grael,' a very different conception of the subject from the later painting of his declining years which bears the same name.

Mr. Mackail, in his life of William Morris, tells us that Burne-Jones first "discovered" Malory in a second-hand bookshop in 1855, and communicated his find to Morris, and together they appear to have jealously guarded and concealed their treasure from the unsympathetic outer world until "a year later they heard Rossetti speak of it and the Bible as the two greatest books in the world, and their tongues were loosed by the sanction of his authority."

The story of the Oxford Union Debating Hall frescoes has been too often told to require lengthy reiteration—how Rossetti persuaded the committee in charge of the building operations to fall in with his scheme for decorating the hall; how seven artists were engaged for the work: Rossetti, Burne-Jones, William Morris, Arthur Hughes, Spencer Stanhope, Val Prinsep, and J. Hungerford Pollen, and how little, alas! these young men knew of the particular kind of work which they had undertaken. The subjects chosen were all

Photo. Hollyer.

Tristram and Yseult drinking the love potion (p. 20).
By D. G. Rossetti.

Photo. Mansell.

Cassandra (p. 17).
By D. G. Rossetti.

Photo. Hollyer. *How they met themselves (p. 22).* *By D. G. Rossetti.*

chamber.' To this Celtic cycle of legends also belongs a very fine design of later date, 'Tristram and Yseult drinking the Love Potion' (p. 18). In few other works, within my own range of knowledge, is the fatalistic conception of love so well expressed as in this picture and the 'Paolo and Francesca.' The all-powerfulness of fate seems to overshadow the lovers as irresistibly as in the Greek drama.

Among the English poets living in his own time, none appealed more strongly to Rossetti than Browning. In the early Pre-Raphaelite days he painted, or commenced, several pictures illustrative of his works. 'The Laboratory' (p. 22), which is probably the first water-colour which Rossetti painted, illustrates the lines in Browning's poem bearing that name:

> "In this devil's smithy,
> Which is the poison to poison her, prithee?"

and shows the lady with clenched hands and eager passionate eyes purchasing with her jewels the poison destined for her rival. This the aged alchemist is holding in a small phial while evidently giving full medical directions to the impatient lady. This is very different from the rest of Rossetti's vividly bright water-colours, but it is full of life and vigour, and warm and deep in colour.

Among others of Rossetti's mediæval water-colours of the middle period of his life and art we may mention 'Fra Pace' (p. 22), a delightful little picture representing a monk

taken from the Arthurian legends, and the artists demanded no money-payment for their work beyond their expenses during the period they were engaged on it. Many entertaining stories are told of these days, and it is alleged, among other things, that the keep of the artists cost the committee a sum considerably beyond what they had anticipated, for, apart from the fact that much too short a period had been estimated for the work, the catering being left to their own discretion, they revelled in orgies of plum puddings and similar fare, not to mention lavish supplies of ultramarine and other expensive pigment.

Rossetti chose as his two subjects, 'Lancelot asleep before the Chapel of the Sanc Grael,' and 'Sir Galahad, Sir Bors and Sir Percival receiving the Sanc Grael.' Unfortunately, as stated above, owing to the artists knowing very little concerning the medium they had to deal with, little now remains of these brilliant and valuable decorations, beyond a blurred mass of colour, whence emerges an occasional limb or face as in a Japanese depiction of a fire. Rossetti made a third design intended for one of the vacant bays, which, however, he never executed, representing 'Lancelot escaping from Guenevere's

From the picture in the Collection of Fairfax Murray, Esq. *The Merciless Lady (p. 22).* *By D. G. Rossetti.*

From the original in the South Kensington Museum.

The Borgia Family (p. 21).
By D. G. Rossetti.

kneeling at a desk and absorbed in the illumination of a manuscript. He has evidently been long engaged on the work, for a cat has coiled up to sleep in the folds of his robe, whom a juvenile acolyte, evidently somewhat *désœuvré*, tickles with a straw. The monk, clearly a Pre-Raphaelite, is copying with great minuteness a dead mouse which lies on the desk in front of him.

Another particularly charming water-colour, which belongs to the close of 1859, is the 'Christmas Carol,' which inspired Swinburne's poem of that name, beginning—

> "Three damsels in the queen's chamber;
> The queen's mouth is most fair:
> She spake a word of God's mother
> As the combs went in her hair."

The queen is seated, playing on a sort of clavichord, while two attendant ladies comb her vivid copper-red hair. This picture is a brilliant piece of colour, and in conception and design it ranks among the most delightful productions of Rossetti's second period. By the courtesy of Mr. Fairfax Murray we reproduce this picture as frontispiece.

'Before the Battle,' which belongs to the succeeding year, Rossetti said he painted "during a solitary stay in the country of some length when peculiarly nourishing himself in mediæval impressions." It is, indeed, a perfect feast of mediæval costume and sentiment, and represents a castleful of ladies who have been embroidering banners, which are now being fastened to the spears by the lady of the castle.

Rossetti painted two pictures dealing with the Borgias, one of early date, reproduced above, showing Lucrezia seated, with her brother Cesare and Pope Alexander VI. close by, listening to music and watching two children dancing. In the other Borgia picture the unscrupulous Lucrezia is washing her hands after preparing the poisoned draught for her husband, whom, with wifely concern, she is watching, as, hobbling on crutches, he is being walked up and down the room by

From Mr. Marillier's Monograph.

Fra Pace (p. 20).
By D. G. Rossetti.

Alexander VI., "to settle the poison well into his system," as Rossetti put it. This edifying little scene is reflected in a small circular mirror behind Lucrezia's head. Rossetti completely altered this picture from its original form some time after first painting it. Thus, in these two pictures we are given Lucrezia Borgia's two principal characteristics—her love of art in the first, her decidedly irregular moral character in the second.

'The Merciless Lady' (p. 20) shows a man seated between two ladies and listening ecstatically to the singing of the fair one on his left, while the other, who evidently has some claim on his affections, seeks in vain to draw him away from her rival. The rapt expression and attitude of the man are excellent, while the look of frowning and unswerving determination on the dark girl's face gives rise to a faint hope that she may yet win back her too susceptible lover. On the ground in front of them her glass of wine stands untouched. The other two are drained, and may, in some measure, account for the present frame of mind of the couple.

The supernatural exercised a strong fascination over Rossetti's mind, though he never abandoned himself to any irrational extent to communion with "bogeys," for whom, however, he entertained a genuine regard and affection. One of the subjects of a weird and uncanny nature which he depicted is 'How they met themselves' (p. 20). Two lovers strolling at twilight through a wood are, of a sudden, confronted with their own doubles. The lady falls back in a faint, while her lover, terror-stricken, makes a vain effort to draw his sword. The apparitions glance defiantly at the lovers as they pass on—the bogey-lover, no doubt, amused at this feeble material effort to undo him. The first design of this subject, belonging to 1851, has been lost, but Rossetti re-drew it several years later, and also painted two water-colour versions.

V.—Types of Beauty.

AND now we come to that section of Rossetti's works by which he is best known, and which marks the last, and in some respects the richest, period of his art. In those single female figures which Rossetti commenced to paint in about the year 1862—types of physical and spiritual beauty which appealed to him, and each one of which embodied some particular conception of the artist's of life or art—are displayed at once Rossetti's greatness and the defects appertaining to it. In them we can trace, as it were, the increase, the summit, and the decline of his power. The simplicity, the love of and strict fidelity to Nature which characterised his early works, are diminished, but we have in all its force, sometimes even to the extent of exaggeration, those qualities in which he most noticeably excelled—beauty of colour and form, ardour and elevation of thought, wealth of semi-mystical imagination. Rossetti was by nature too much of an idealist, too great a worshipper of the beautiful in art, too decidedly a *creative* genius to remain long a strict naturalist in his paintings. In early youth, when he felt the necessity of freeing himself from the traditions and fetters of the past in order to assert his own powerful individuality, he turned to

From the picture in the Collection of Fairfax Murray, Esq.

The Laboratory (p. 20).
By D. G. Rossetti.

Nature—the only starting point whence an artist can strike out a path of his own, the only school where he can study and remain himself—but as time went on the rigid naturalism of his earliest works gave way before the creative impetus of his own mind, and he created a style of his own and a school of his own.

All the wealth of thought and imagination, all the passion for beauty, which in his earlier days found scope in such designs as the 'Salutation of Beatrice,' 'Giotto painting Dante's Portrait,' and the 'Cassandra,' he now crowded into one single figure and its attributes, often masterpieces of concentrated thought and expression and supremely beautiful, but not unfrequently over-exuberant, over-freighted, as it were, with meaning and sentiment. Thus, while some of these single figures, such as the earlier 'Beata Beatrix' and the later 'Proserpine,' are perfect revelations of Rossetti's thought, in others of his later ones we might almost say that everything is over-intensified, and this finds material expression in exaggerations amounting to mannerism—as, for instance, in the 'Blessed Damosel' of 1877 (p. 24). Some of these later works, combined with ignorance and the natural density of public criticism, have given rise to the most erroneous notion that Rossetti was merely an exaggerated mannerist who painted nothing but throats impossibly long, and lips equally impossibly full.

One of the earliest of these single-figure compositions, and in some respects one of the most beautiful, is 'Lady Lilith' (p. 25), a depiction of sensuous beauty to which belongs that sonnet in the "House of Life" named "Body's Beauty," of which the following four lines best express the intention of the picture:—

> ". . . And still she sits, young while the earth is old,
> And subtly of herself contemplative,
> Draws men to watch the bright web she can weave
> Till heart and body and life are in its hold."

This canvas is, indeed, a perfect feast of physical beauty, from the beautiful, indolent, sensuous woman combing her hair and rapt in the contemplation of herself, to the wealth of flowers in which she is embowered, prominent among which we can note the poisonous foxglove, the rich draperies which clothe her, and the ornaments that surround her. Rossetti, who had unfortunately a prejudice against leaving well alone, took up the face at a later date and considerably deteriorated it. The warmth and vigour of life are gone from the later face, which is a mere mask of those passions of which the former is the living semblance.

In contrast to 'Lilith,' the embodiment of sensuous beauty, Rossetti began in 1866, and finished in 1870, another large oil painting embodying spiritual beauty. Side by side with the 'Body's Beauty' in the "House of Life" is 'Soul's Beauty,' descriptive of the Sibylla Palmifera.

Holding a palm leaf in her right hand, with eyes gazing steadily and seriously ahead, and enthroned in stone, this is, indeed, a contrast to the languishing and self-contemplative embodiment of bodily beauty. These pictures taken together are, as it were, a new expression of Titian's famous 'Sacred and Profane Love,' and only less rich in colour and beauty than the great Venetian's work.

Another painting which, like 'Lady Lilith,' gives expression to physical beauty is the 'Venus Verticordia.' This as it originally stood was one of Rossetti's strongest and completest pieces of work, but at a later date he spoiled it by repainting the face, which, thus altered, is comparatively weak and belongs to a lower intellectual standard than the great mass of his work, though even now it is impossible not to admire the magnificence of the flowers which surround and, as it were, clothe the otherwise naked Venus. Rossetti entertained some doubts concerning the reception which might be accorded to this semi-nudity, some of his purchasers being remarkably squeamish in such matters. One of these, Mr. Valpy, nicknamed the Vampire by Rossetti, objected even to an arm being left undraped, which almost gives rise to the suspicion that there was some foundation of truth in the Vampire-nickname, and that the good gentleman feared not only moral disorganisation as a result, but that the spectacle of human flesh, even in counterfeit, proved too great a trial to his ghoulish nature.

The 'Astarte Syriaca' (p. 31), although not free from

From Mr. Marillier's Monograph.

Proserpine (p. 24). By D. G. Rossetti.

The Blessed Damosel (p. 23).
By D. G. Rossetti.

some of the exaggeration connected with Rossetti's later work, is a truly majestic conception of the Assyrian Venus. The painter wished to express in this picture the mystery of beauty—that eternal mystery which, despite all analysers and classifiers, must always remain beyond the power or scope of the human understanding. The stately form of the Astarte, standing erect against a sky, blood-red from the setting sun, where the moon rises, is the very embodiment of mystery. A fine sonnet of Rossetti's belongs to the 'Astarte Syriaca':

"Mystery: lo! betwixt the sun and moon
Astarte of the Syrians; Venus Queen
Ere Aphrodite was. In silver sheen
Her twofold girdle clasps the infinite boon
Of bliss whereof the earth and heaven commune:
And from her neck's inclining flower-stem lean
Love-freighted lips and absolute eyes that wean
The pulse of hearts to the sphere's dominant tune.
"Torch-bearing her sweet ministers compel
All thrones of light beyond the sky and sea
The witnesses of Beauty's face to be:
That face of Love's all penetrative spell,
Amulet, talisman and oracle,
Betwixt the sun and moon a mystery."

'Mnemosyne,' a figure bearing close resemblance to the 'Astarte,' for which it was probably a study, is scarcely the realisation of "remembrance fallen from heaven," but rather of gloomy memory brooding over the sadness of the past, which no thought of the future alleviates.

Among the very finest of these pictures which belong to Rossetti's later period is the 'Proserpine' (p. 23). This expresses most forcibly the Greek conception of Death as opposed to the Christian. Standing alone in a corridor of the halls of Hades, Proserpine broods gloomily and regretfully on the world she has forsaken—the world of light and life for which the Greeks regarded the darkness and inactivity of Hades as a pitiable exchange. The dim light of the lower regions is illuminated by a bright ray of light from the world above. Mrs. William Morris was the model for 'Proserpine,' as also for the 'Astarte Syriaca' and 'Mnemosyne,' all three of which are grand portrayals of her tragic type of beauty.

A very fine study for a never executed picture, 'Silence,' which bears considerable resemblance to 'La Donna della Finestra,' belongs to about the year 1870.

'Monna Vanna' is for some not very explicit reason the title given to another of these single-figure compositions—a beautiful lady sumptuously bejewelled and attired in the most gorgeous of gold-embroidered robes, and holding outspread in her hand a fan of black and yellow plumage. This picture might be intended as a representation of luxurious ease; the lady's outlook on life is evidently passive rather than active, and she is the embodiment of easy-going *laissez faire*.

Among the finest specimens of this class not yet referred to should be mentioned 'Monna Rosa,' a standing figure arranging some roses in a bowl; the 'Loving Cup'; 'Aurea Catena,' a most beautiful portrait of Mrs. Morris seated at a parapet in the open air fingering a golden chain, and gazing musingly into space; the 'Lady with the Fan,' a portrait of Fanny Cornforth—the model who sat for 'Lady Lilith' and other pictures of that type; 'Penelope'; 'La Donna della Fiamma'; two very fine 'Pandoras,' and the 'Veronica Veronese,' which is a symbolical representation of the art of music, showing a lady listening to the notes of a canary which she tries to reproduce on her violin. This picture is remarkably beautiful in every detail, and a fine testimony of Rossetti's powers as a colourist. He wished to express here his conception of art as being the creation of the human mind consequent on a personal emotion roused by something in nature, and on the whole it is one of the most admirable productions of Rossetti's later years. He finished it in 1872, the model being the beautiful Miss Wilding, who sat for the 'Sibylla Palmifera,' 'Monna Vanna,' and other pictures.

Among these pictures of later years which mark, in my estimation, a decided decadence from the early vigour of Rossetti's work, may be named 'The Damsel of the Sanc Grael,' a composition belonging to 1874, and not at all in keeping with his Arthurian paintings of earlier date; the 'Blessed Damosel' of 1877—a replica of a very fine picture of earlier date—which, though beautiful in its way, is decidedly impeachable on the score of mannerism; the 'Sea Spell' of 1877, a weak picture with much flowing drapery and little backbone; and, with certain restrictions, 'La Pia,' which was among

Photo. Mansell.

Lady Lilith (p. 23).
By D. G. Rossetti.

the last things he painted. It is agreeable to reflect, however, that despite the decadent tendency noticeable in these works, Rossetti was, by no means, entirely under its influence, for 'The Damsel of the Sanc Grael' belongs to the same years as the 'Proserpine,' while the same year which brought forth the 'Sea Spell' also produced the majestic and powerful 'Astarte Syriaca.'

On the whole we have to thank Rossetti, among other things, for the creation of a type of feminine beauty unsurpassed, and in some respects unequalled, by the works of the great Venetians, a type of woman in which physical and spiritual beauty are so perfectly blended that in some instances it is hard to say which claims supremacy. There is all the passion for physical beauty inherent to a Southerner and an Italian in these works, but not in the most voluptuous, 'Lady Lilith' for instance, is there one single element of coarseness to mar the beauty of the painting, while in some the very mystery of human existence, that undefinable something which we call the soul, seems mirrored in the canvas.

VI.—Portraits and Conclusion.

AS a portrait painter it has often been alleged against Rossetti that he displayed too marked a tendency to idealise. We must remember, however, that he was in the habit of selecting whom he should portray, and as a rule only chose persons whose type of physical or intellectual beauty appealed to him. The fact that the ladies he portrayed usually had full lips, for instance, can thus be easily accounted for by the knowledge that this characteristic pleased him and that he in consequence selected to paint women who possessed it; and not by the erroneous assumption that he was incapable of painting thin lips where they existed, and always replaced them by full ones.

Of members of his own family Rossetti drew and painted numerous portraits. At the beginning of this monograph (p. 2) is reproduced an early drawing representing the artist's father surrounded by the *libri mistici* in which his heart rejoiced—a charming and characteristic portrait of the old Italian; of his mother, than whom was no mother ever more deservedly loved and revered

Rossetti sitting to Miss Siddal (p. 26).
By D. G. Rossetti.

by her children, Dante Gabriel painted several portraits. Among the finest is the crayon drawing in the National Portrait Gallery, reproduced (p. 26), representing Frances Rossetti and her daughter Christina, then in early middle age. As will be seen, the resemblance between mother and daughter was remarkable. The very soul of the poetess of "Passing Away" seems to look out from the sad dreamy eyes of Christina, while the innate nobility and grave earnestness of the mother's face and character are faithfully and lovingly portrayed in the figure beside her. Rossetti painted several other portraits of his gifted sister; some, in youth, showing the austere beautiful face with which we are acquainted in his Madonnas; one, reproduced on p. 2, showing the poetess at the age of thirty-five, and others of a later period when the ravages of illness had left but little of her early beauty, but in which the intensely spiritual and religious side of her nature are exalted. I know of no other modern portraits which are equal in expression to some of these later portraits of Christina Rossetti by her brother, which, like her life, seem to express all the faith and fervour of the Christian religion.

Of his wife Rossetti drew innumerable portraits and sketches both before and after their marriage. Madox Brown refers to these drawings in his diary of 1854—

Miss Siddal hiding drawing and Rossetti finding it (p. 30).
By D. G. Rossetti.

"Gabriel . . . drawing wonderful and lovely 'Guggums' (an uneuphonious pet-name which Rossetti gave his wife), one after another, each one a fresh charm, each one stamped with immortality." In the South Kensington Museum is a pen-and-ink sketch of Miss Siddal standing by a window, which he drew in 1854, a charming portrait, refined and dignified in the extreme. To a date two years subsequent belongs a little pencil drawing representing her with folded hands, reclining in an arm-chair, which is quite one of the most exquisite and delicate drawings from Rossetti's pencil (p. 29). In another drawing Miss Siddal is standing with her hands resting on the back of a chair in front of an easel beside a window in the studio in Chatham Place, overlooking the river (p. 29). From this treasure-house of 'Guggum' sketches we will mention yet another, a drawing of head and shoulders, which gives an excellent idea of her delicate consumptive type of beauty. On this page is a quaint half-caricaturish sketch by Rossetti, which is intended to represent him sitting to Miss Siddal for his portrait.

Photo. Mansell.
Mrs. Rossetti and Miss Christina Rossetti (p. 26).
By D. G. Rossetti.

Lizzie Siddal was herself a remarkable woman, and a number of designs and water-colours, executed under Rossetti's influence, elicited the ungrudging admiration of Ruskin, and bear ample testimony to the rare gifts of imagination she possessed, and her unusual power and facility for design. Her work was terribly interrupted by illness, however; indeed, during the whole course of her friendship and love for Rossetti she was the victim of grievous ill-health, and her tragic early death cast a shadow over the remaining years of the artist's life.

Another very beautiful and gifted lady whose features appear in some of Rossetti's pictures—the 'Dante's Dream' and 'Vision of Fiammetta' among others—and whose portrait he drew on more than one occasion, was Mrs. Stillman, *née* Marie Spartali.

Perhaps Rossetti's most beautiful oil-portrait is that of Mrs. William Morris in the Tate Gallery, which, besides the quality of expression in which he always excelled, is a most splendid and brilliant piece of colour. The sketch on p. 1, and that which bears the title of 'The Couch' (p. 30) were drawn from Mrs. Morris.

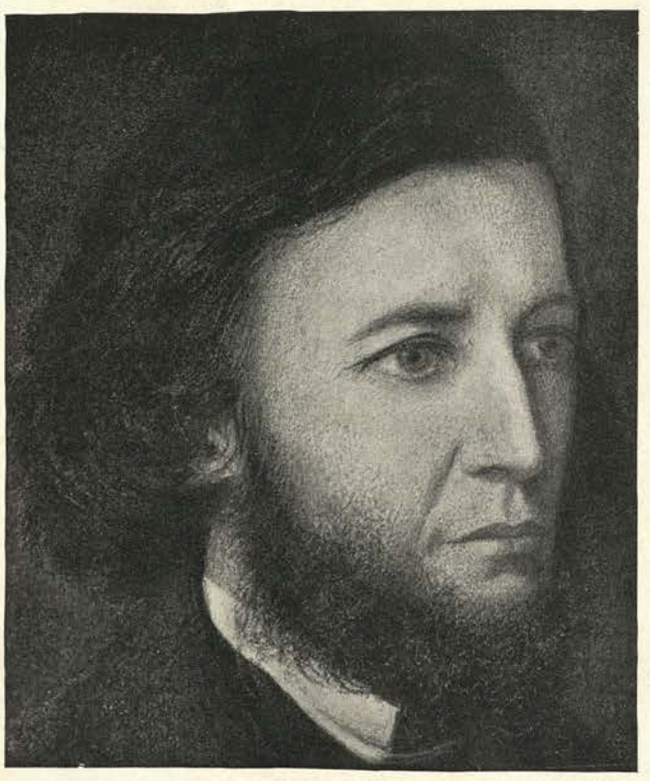
In 1874 he drew the fine portrait of his sister-in-law, Lucy Madox Rossetti (p. 28), serious and kindly in expression, and a masterpiece of pastel drawing, a medium in which he excelled.

Tennyson reading "Maud" (p. 27).
A sketch by D. G. Rossetti.

In his portrait of Swinburne (p. 27) we are shown the poet in his early days, the youthful and enthusiastic author of the "Poems and Ballads" which startled and horrified Philistine England. He looks out from the canvas so full of life, vigour, and inspiration, that in looking at it we seem almost to hear the roll and rhythm of his impetuous verse. The vigorous crop of bright auburn hair is splendid in colour, and the flesh is rich and vivid in tone.

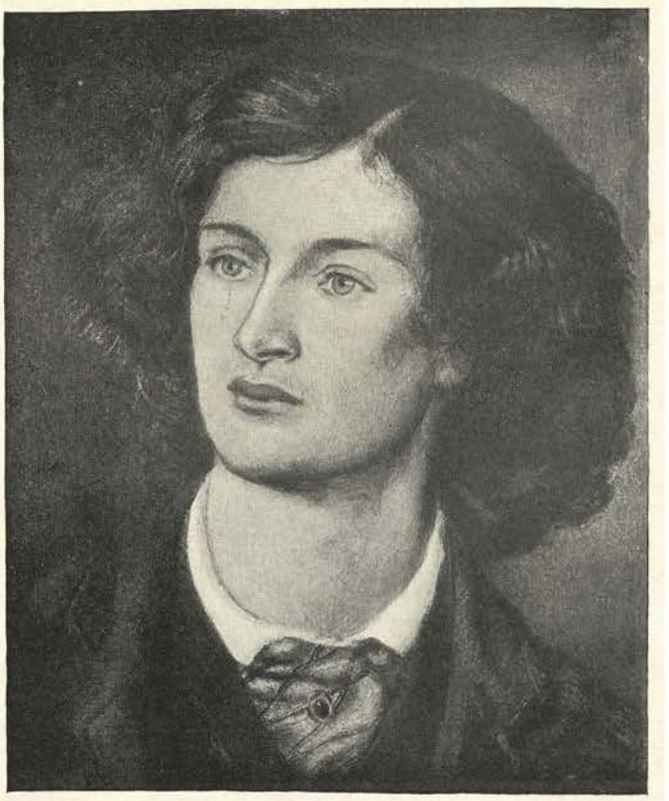
Of Robert Browning (p. 27), whose poetry deeply impressed Rossetti and his circle, we have likewise a water-colour portrait which is vigorous, lifelike, and full of intellectual strength. From his pen we have also some very interesting sketches of Tennyson reading "Maud" aloud, which Rossetti took during a gathering in Browning's house in 1855 (p. 27). The fact is, Rossetti was not suited for general portraiture, and was at his best only when the subject of it appealed either to his intellect or his sense of beauty.

The main purpose of Rossetti's painting was the



From the picture in the Collection of Fairfax Murray, Esq.

Robert Browning (p. 27).
By D. G. Rossetti.



From the picture in the Collection of Fairfax Murray, Esq

A. G. Swinburne (p. 27).
By D. G. Rossetti.

creation of beautiful things, in which respect the majority of his work is a perfect triumph. Without venturing any attempt to analyse the quality of beauty, I simply mean by this that the contemplation of Rossetti's pictures gives pleasure and satisfaction to the eye and senses, just as the contemplation of a beautiful object in nature gives pleasure—a sunset or a fine landscape, for instance. He was supreme among modern painters as a colourist and unsurpassed by any, ancient or modern, in the realisation of certain types—deep and lofty ones—of expression. If as a painter and a colourist he does not bear comparison to the masters of the ancient Venetian school, I certainly do not know of any head by Titian or Tintoretto which is comparable to his Beatrice in the 'Salutation' or his 'Astarte Syriaca' in respect to expression. There is an unfathomable depth of expression in Beatrice's eyes, and even Leonardo, if more subtle, was never more spiritual or refined.

His life, as an artist, may be roughly divided into four periods which might be compared to the four principal phases of Italian art: the first epoch being that in which Giotto and Simon Memmi were feeling their way from decadent Byzantinism to a revival in art; the second that of the later and more advanced of the *primitivi*; the third, the richest epoch of the Venetian School and the early Renaissance; the fourth, the later Renaissance which gradually led on to the decay of Italian art. During the first, or Pre-Raphaelite, Rossetti's most important works deal with religious subjects and are characterised by great purity and simplicity, earnest endeavour after truth, and sympathy for religious feeling, without, however, any of the true exaltation belonging to a faith which was not his. As a painter he was yet feeling his way. In colour these earliest works are comparatively crude and lacking in depth and richness. The leading productions of this period are the 'Girlhood of Mary Virgin,' the 'Ecce Ancilla Domini,' the two versions of 'The Anniversary of the Death of Beatrice,' and the 'Laboratory.'

The second period is devoted principally to Dante and the Arthurian legends, and consists mainly of small water-colour compositions, brilliant in colouring, romantic in feeling, strong in imaginative and inventive strength, while many of the earlier ones still bear decided traces of Pre-Raphaelism. Noticeable among the productions of this second period are 'The Salutation of Beatrice,' 'Dante's Vision of Rachel and Leah,' the Arthurian designs for Oxford and otherwise, and 'Bonifazio's Mistress.' The 'Bocca Baciata' (p. 15), a very beautiful and carefully executed little painting of a pretty woman surrounded by marigolds, and suggested, as the title indicates, by a line of an old Italian ditty, "Bocca baciata non perde ventura, anzi rinuova come fa la Luna," may be said to mark the meeting-point between the second and third period.

The third and central period is also the richest, counting some of Rossetti's finest small water-colours and the first and strongest specimens of his single-figure type. It is the period to which belong his richest colouring and his most powerful realisation of Beauty. To it belongs what is usually considered the finest production of Rossetti's life and art, the 'Beloved,' which is indeed a very apotheosis of feminine beauty. As will be seen from our plate (opposite p. 16), it is a purely human conception of the Bride of the Canticles, and has nothing to do with any religious sentiment or interpretation. Surrounded by her maidens, she advances to meet the bridegroom, and at his approach she unveils her face, which, for radiant beauty and purity is almost without parallel in the annals of pictorial art. She realises the lines of the song: "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners?" Rich and splendid in colour beyond all description is the bride's gorgeous robe, which is of a wonderful Rossettian green, embroidered with red and gold. The bridesmaids who surround her represent divers types of beauty, Eastern and Gipsy and European, while in front of the bride, in striking contrast to the delicate tints of her flesh, stands a little negro holding a golden vase of roses. This picture forms part of the magnificent collection belonging to Mr. George Rae, of Birkenhead.

Lucy Madox Rossetti (p. 27).
By D. G. Rossetti.

The finest version of the 'Paolo and Francesca,' the 'Cassandra,' 'Beata Beatrix' and 'Lady Lilith,' are among the numerous productions of this central period.

The last period, which may be said to date from about 1872 to the artist's death, includes many very fine specimens of his later style, such as the 'Proserpine,' the 'Roman Widow,' and the 'Astarte Syriaca,' but much of his later work, especially in re-touching, shows the decadence produced by illness, chloral, failing eyesight, and a morbid state of mind and feeling.

One very favourite error with regard to Rossetti's pictures, and one which has been repeated and repeated *ad nauseam*, is that he only painted one type of face and

Miss Siddal (p. 26).
By D. G. Rossetti.

restricted himself almost exclusively—if not quite so—to a single female model. It would be well-nigh incomprehensible to me how such an erroneous impression could have gained ground were it not for the tendency there is among the majority of people to cherish illusions of this kind where works of art are concerned, and to avalanche them at you at every appropriate and inappropriate opportunity. It is difficult to understand how this single-model theory can be entertained by anyone who is at all adequately acquainted with Rossetti's works. The 'Beata Beatrix,' the 'Astarte Syriaca,' the women in the 'Beloved,' the 'Lady Lilith,' the 'Sibylla Palmifera,' and the Virgin in the 'Annunciation,' are surely as diverse types of women as can well be found in any single painter's work. Even when he repeats the same head—as in the instance of 'Ophelia,' the Beatrice in 'Dante's Dream,' and the 'Bocca Baciata,' being heads painted from the same persons as in instances above cited—he introduces such variations of expression, etc., as to do away with any tedious monotony.

I have spoken of Rossetti's work as a painter, almost to the exclusion of his achievements in the field of poetry, not because I regard him as greater in this first respect than in the second, but simply because here we are more concerned with his paintings. In point of fact it would be difficult to say, in which of the two greats arts he excelled—he himself inclined to think more highly of his poetry. But although he was perhaps more flawless as a poet, he did occasionally attain to perfection in both arts, and it would be as impossible to improve upon the 'Paolo and Francesca,' as it would to better 'Sister Helen.'

I can think of only one other Englishman who combined with equal strength the two divine gifts of poetry and design, and that is William Blake. Mad or sane (and after all madness and sanity are but relative), he was undoubtedly a remarkable genius, and if his design of the 'Crucifixion,' his 'Stars singing together,' and his 'Jerusalem,' are the products of insanity, I can only say that it is to be regretted that the majority of mankind are so uncompromisingly sane. No two men could be more diverse in character, in their outlook upon life, or in their influence, than Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Blake, but, with the exception of these two, I can recall no single Englishman of whom it can be said, "He was equally great as a poet and as a designer; and he was supremely great as both."

To write about Rossetti the artist, and say no word of Rossetti the man, would not be possible, for he was of such powerful and striking personality, that his work seems truly part of himself, and it is impossible

Miss Siddal: from a drawing in the possession of H. T. Wells, R.A. (p. 26).
(From Mr. Marillier's monograph.) *By D. G. Rossetti.*

to disconnect the one from the other.

There are some artists whose productions strike us as fortuitous—the outcome of circumstances and influences foreign to themselves. In many instances, indeed, we are content to take the work and let the author alone; sometimes we are better pleased to ignore or forget him. With Rossetti this is not so.

Photo. Mansell.
The Couch: Sketch of Mrs. Morris (p. 27).
By D. G. Rossetti.

All those who came into personal contact with Rossetti—whether friends, mere acquaintances, dependants or members of his own family—appear to have fallen under the spell of his strong personal fascination. Indeed, this appears to have been so marked that one who believes in any regular system in the universe might well question whether something had not gone wrong with that part of the machinery which regulates the economy of things, seeing that Rossetti's character was given to an artist rather than to a man of action. The greatest statesmen and warriors of the world have owed more to their power of fascinating their fellows than to any other quality. It is invaluable in practical dealings with men, more subtle than the finest diplomacy, and more powerful than a battalion of soldiers. To it Napoleon owed much of his success; without it he had been a lost man over and over again, and the return from Elba had never been. It is the quality *par excellence* which belongs to the leaders of men, and the distinctive mark of genius.

This power of personal fascination was, I think, the most distinctive trait in his character. His influence over the men who surrounded him—even the great men—was extraordinary. A man of genius and of powerful character, like William Morris, was scarcely the sort of man to be strongly influenced by another, but Mr. Mackail in his biography of him records how once on Burne-Jones' complaining that his designs in Rossetti's manner seemed better than his own, Morris replied with vehemence, "I have got beyond that; I want to imitate Gabriel in all I do." And there is in fact no doubt that Rossetti exercised great influence over all the great men of his set.

As may be imagined with a man of his stamp, Rossetti was used to getting his own way and to carrying everything in front of him in what he undertook. His friends appear never to have disputed this right with him, but to have quietly acquiesced. In his "Autobiography of a Journalist" Mr. W. J. Stillman, speaking of Rossetti in his later years, writes: "Rossetti's was one of the most fascinating characters I ever knew, open and expansive, and, when well, he had a vein of most delightful talk of the things which interested him. . . . He had a frank egotism which made him see everything and everybody purely in their relation to himself. . . . Whatever was to his hand was made for his use, and when we went into the house at Robertsbridge he at once took the place of master of the house, as if he had invited me, rather than the converse, going through the rooms to select, and saying, 'I will take this' of those which suited him best, and 'You may have that,' of those he had no fancy for. . . . No one rebelled at being treated in this princely way, for it was only with his friends that he used it. He dominated all who had the least sympathy with him or his genius."

In youth and in his prime he was the most delightful, lovable, and fascinating of companions; generous, humorous, always ready for a good joke or piece of fun. And even in his later years, when trouble, illness, and the disastrous effect of the drug by means of which he sought to battle with insomnia, had left their mark on Rossetti, he still retained much of his early charm, and there is ample evidence to show him still in the light of a delightful and entertaining friend and host to those who were privileged to be numbered among his friends.

I doubt whether any human quality is more powerful in rendering a man popular among his fellows than a sense of humour. The true humorist is as far removed from the aggressive joke-maker—that dullest and most wearisome of men—as pole from pole. A touch of humour at an opportune moment can turn the very gall of anger into honey; if clumsy or injudicious, it sours the milk of human kindness itself. Rossetti possessed a true and fine sense of humour, which enabled him without effort and unprompted by envy or malice, to make fun of his friends, his patrons, his enemies, and often, indeed, of his own works. Innumerable are the tales told by friends of his never-failing and good-natured humour, while his letters are quite masterpieces of unaffected and humorous epistolary style.

Among the "Guggum" sketches are several of a quaint and humorous turn. Here is one showing Miss Siddal, sublimely unconscious of the eye of Providence which watches her from above and beholds all things, hiding away a drawing of her own which she evidently did not wish Rossetti to see (p. 26). In the next compartment we are shown Rossetti, surrounded by a host of unpaid bills which litter table and mantel-shelf and floor, finding the drawing concealed behind a number of portfolios and canvases. The surrounding details of this little sketch recall some verses in a humorous valentine he addressed to Lizzie Siddal, in which he lamented his forlorn condition during her absence:

"The bore was heard ere noon; the dun
Was at the door by half-past one:
At least 'tis thought so, but the clock—
No Lizzie there to help its stroke—
Struck work before the day begun.

. . . . . .

Some time over the fire he sat,
So lonely that he missed his cat:
Then wildly rushed to dine on tick—
Nine minutes swearing for his stick
And thirteen minutes for his hat."

This disorder of his apartments, combined with his irregular hours, seems to have been a great cause of vexation to Ruskin, who often refers to it in his correspondence, as for instance: "If you wanted to oblige *me* you would keep your room in order and go to bed at night. All your fine speeches go for nothing till you do that."

Rossetti was the most generous of men, and as willing to take trouble for his friends as he was ready to give it. Many great men are grudging in their praise and envious

or depreciatory of the greatness of others. Rossetti, on the contrary, took the keenest interest in the talents and work of those in whom he detected the capacity to do something, and nothing gave him greater pleasure than the success of his friends. Not all of these, however, have displayed similar disinterestedness with regard to himself or his memory.

In his youth and prime he did not err in the direction of super-sensitiveness in regard to adverse criticism. In later life, however, when under the influence of nervous illness and chloral, he became highly sensitive and morbid in certain directions (especially where any aspersion was cast on his moral tone), and indeed the idea of persecution and conspiracies may be said to have assumed the proportions of a monomania in his last years. The disastrous effect on his nerves and health produced by Buchanan's attack, "The Fleshly School of Poetry," is only too well known, and to go into the history of the matter would be both unnecessary and undesirable here. Suffice it to say that the attack was unjustifiable and spiteful, and that had Rossetti been in an ordinary condition of health and nervous stability he would have treated it with indifference and contempt. The whole incident only serves as a further proof, if proof were needed, of the objectionable character of these factitious moral excitements which people are in the habit of getting up concerning those whom they can neither appreciate nor understand.

From the picture in the Manchester Art Gallery.

Astarte Syriaca (p. 23). By D. G. Rossetti.

One trait which was very distinctive of Rossetti's character was enthusiasm. At the present day when this quality is associated almost exclusively with white hair, and when only those men who are approaching or who have passed the allotted term of threescore and ten seem capable of youthful energy and impetus, it is difficult to conceive the genuine enthusiasm for an ideal—be it political, social, or artistic—which animated Rossetti and the youths associated with him, which kept them at their easels, amid surroundings not always of the most cheerful kind, painting unpopular subjects for the greater glory of their art, and which accompanied many of them to the grave.

We have already briefly referred to Rossetti's attitude towards matters of religion. He was by nature rather a believer than an agnostic; but all the enthusiasm and faith inherent to his nature, which in another man might have found expression in religious fervour, he put into his art, which was the one great faith, purpose and ideal of his life. As to the existence of a deity, his not very conclusive ideas on the subject are fairly well summarised in this line in "Soothsay": "To God at best, to Chance at worst."

For the rest, Rossetti was an upright man, free from envy and those petty and mean qualities which alone we have any particular right to judge or censure, a man rather of passions and impulses than of any very logical or definable causes and results. A London cabman once referred to him as a "harbitrary cove," and I sometimes think that the man came nearer to a correct definition of Rossetti's character than numbers of biographers, psychologists and demonstrators who have attempted to analyze it.

His life was uneventful so far as actual occurrences are concerned; though a life like his, so productive of great things, and so intimately associated with great men, was, in fact, most eventful in the truest sense of the word, and not to himself alone.

Of his early life and early struggles to establish his position as an artist, his brother has told us in his memoir, how, among other things, he at one time vaguely contemplated railway telegraphy as a more encouraging and lucrative career than art, and how this consummation was, in the public interest and his own, mercifully averted by the hand of Providence, for which interception both railway travellers and lovers of art should be grateful. He also has told us about the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the interesting little circle of Brothers—their doings, their meeting, their friendships and their dissolution—of the "Germ," which germinated and prematurely died, unable to command a shilling a copy from the public who now are willing to pay £100. (So powerful are the decrees of Fashion!)

The most important event in his private life was his love for the beautiful and delicate Miss Siddal, and the most tragic her death from an over-dose of laudanum two years after their marriage.

His outer life in later years centres principally round his house in Cheyne Walk, the friends he housed and entertained there, the work he did there, and the life he led. Besides his human friends, he kept for many years large numbers of dumb or inarticulate ones, and had a perfect passion for quaint and out-of-the-way beasts—

Rossetti's Studio at Cheyne Walk (p. 32).
Sketch by H. Treffry Dunn.

owls, wombats, hedgehogs, and a zebu were among the number.

The house itself, which Rossetti took much pains in furnishing, was filled with rare and beautiful objects which he collected—old china, Japanese prints and boxes of all shapes and sizes, pictures, prints, old furniture, and innumerable unclassifiable objects of a quaint or beautiful kind. The little views, on this page, of his studio and drawing-room in Cheyne Walk will be interesting as being connected with the life and work of their occupier.

The one great sin of omission of Rossetti's life was his never visiting Italy. It is, indeed, almost incredible that this passionate worshipper of the beautiful, this lover of Italian art and literature, who interpreted so nobly in his painting the poetry of Dante Alighieri, and was one of those who "invented," so to speak, Botticelli and the early Italian painters in this country—it was almost incredible, I say, that this man of Italian blood and Italian sympathies should never have visited Italian soil. Such, however, despite his life-long intention to do so, was the fact. Procrastination was among Rossetti's numerous defects.

Thus he lived and did his work and died on English soil, without ever having seen the country which was more than half his own. He passed away in Birchington-on-Sea on the 9th April, 1882, in the 54th year of his life, after many years of painful and protracted illness, nervous and otherwise. In the cemetery of this obscure little sea-side town his resting-place is marked by a Celtic cross designed by his friend, Ford Madox Brown.

Too brief a period has elapsed since Rossetti's death to render it possible to speculate with any certainty as to what relative position he will be accorded in the long run among the painters of the nineteenth century. The decision of so important an issue must remain with time alone. Much has been said in criticism of the technical imperfections which belong to Rossetti's works. I think, however, that it may safely be said that, whatever his imperfections as a *painter* may have been—and is there not a certain tendency to exaggerate these?—as an *artist* he ranks, and always will rank, very high. It is not skilful technique alone, not the mere handling of brushes and pigment, which count in a picture; for then Filippo Lippi would count as a lesser man than Carlo Dolci. There is beyond mere technical perfection that undefinable quality which appeals to the senses and the mind which is the real essence of fine art; and this remains through all the ages, unalterable. It is the same in the great Assyrian monuments, in Phidias, in Giotto, in Michel Angelo, in Hokusai, and in the great modern painters. It is this quality which alone ensures the endurance of a work of art.

In conclusion, I may add that Rossetti appears to me to have been almost unique among modern painters in his *absolute* originality. His name can be associated with no single school of painting, unless it be that which he himself created. Even in his earliest days we can see no foreign influences in his work. The greater number of even the most individual and creative of modern painters have passed through various schools and influences before discovering their own endowment, before fully asserting their own individuality. Rossetti is an almost solitary exception to this rule. He was from the beginning his own master, his own developer, and his own school.

HELEN M. MADOX ROSSETTI.

Rossetti's Drawing-room at Cheyne Walk (p. 32).
Sketch by George T. Robinson.

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Mural Decoration.

FROM the time as far back as can be traced in the history of the world to the present day, mural decoration has always afforded scope for variety of treatment. In their respective ways, the picture-writings of Egypt, the wall-paintings at Pompeii, the fresco decorations of Italy, and the tapestries of mediæval Europe, have helped to enliven empty wall spaces. After periods when wood panelling in different styles was fashionable, modern taste commands attention to wall-papers. Incomparable as this comparatively modern creation is to the laborious productions of artists of former times, yet some of the most imaginative artists of the day are engaged in perfecting this means of decoration.

The manufacture of wall-paper is one of the artistic industries identified with the nineteenth century. It is true that towards the end of the eighteenth century this form of wall-covering began to be used; but it was not until the early part of the nineteenth century that it became the cause of great commercial enterprise. Messrs. W. Woollams and Co., founded in 1810, claimed to be the originators of printed wall-paper in this country, and their museum of old designs and manufactured goods has passed into the possession of their successors, Messrs. Arthur Sanderson and Sons, Ltd. On the next page is reproduced a portion of a very old pattern, the original of which was hung on a wall, discovered on the removal of a partition in an old mansion in Clandon Park. The design, stencilled in flock, is estimated to be at least 200 years old, a proof that this department of wall decoration can boast a respectable antiquity.

The best designs among the relics left by Messrs. Woollams are being adapted to modern requirements by the present owners, and, as infinite pains are being taken to preserve the beauty of the old work, the world will be enriched by the revival. The means to approach perfection that the former producers lacked are now possessed and manipulated to a degree of great efficiency by Messrs. Sanderson. But the reproduction of these old designs compared to their activity in the printing and disposal of modern work is, in a degree, a form of relaxation. It is their more serious work which calls for attention.

It might be supposed that the apparent perfection of mechanical printing would have long since rendered obsolete the methods of production available in earlier days. But extensively though machinery is used, to those who prefer the stamp of individuality to rigidly correct printing, hand-printed goods are in considerable demand. In order to supply the market with this particular class of goods, hand-printed and stencilled designs receive a large share of attention, and it is curious to note that such work is produced by almost the identical process used by Messrs. Woollams in 1810. By reason of the slowness of the method, and the extreme care which is necessary to obtain the desired effects, such patterns are more expensive; but where cost is no object, the result is undeniably superior.

Messrs. Sanderson and Sons have earned a right to be named as the leading wall-paper manufacturers. This distinction is merited not only by the superiority of the productions of their designers, but by

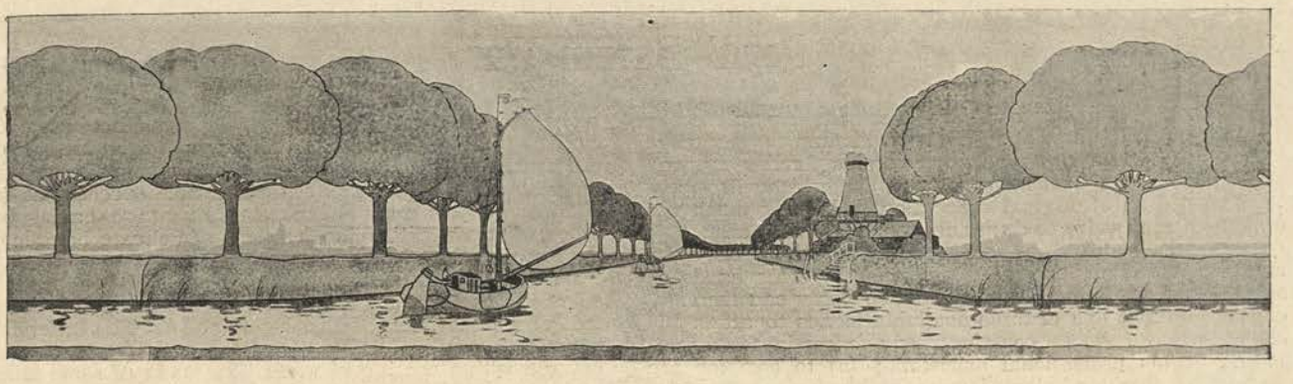
"Claude" Design, by Arthur Sanderson & Sons, Ltd.

h s kill with which the rich colour effects are obtained. It is a pleasure to refer to the ability of the firm to satisfy the requirements of all classes, and a visit to their showrooms will quickly convince the visitor of the unanimous striving of many workers towards refined decoration. One indication of the desire to afford customers every facility to choose designs, is an arrangement by which any wall-paper can be seen by artificial as well as natural light. Few more agreeable occupations can be imagined than an hour or two of leisure in their showrooms.

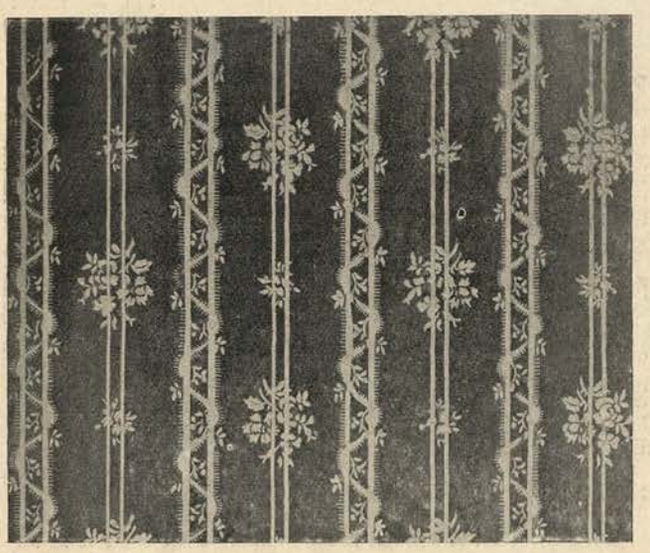
The illustrations on the opposite page are a few selected to show as well as may be in black and white, the charm of a few stock patterns. The "Kremlin" and "Belgrave" designs are conspicuously rich in effect, the colours giving a natural appearance to the floral pattern. The "Laurel Leaf" design is one which will commend itself to those who desire a dignified, almost stern, decoration; and the "Princess May" pattern, reproduced from a silk design for use in the Royal Palaces, will form, on account of its delicacy and brightness, a fitting embellishment to such rooms as afford scope for specially dainty treatment. The "Canal" frieze needs little comment. It is a quaint imitation of a Dutch scene, and the design lends itself to most effective use. The illustration shows the extent of the pattern, which is repeated as opportunity suggests, the intermediate spaces being occupied with the fan-like trees only. This gives the effect of a hand-painted frieze at a very reasonable cost. The "Claude" design above can be used either with or without the border as occasion needs, to give the effect of an old tapestry panel or a continuous landscape frieze. Among other excellent subjects which are not reproduced here, but which will alone repay a visit to the Show Rooms, 52, Berners Street, the "Owl" and "Peacock" designs may be mentioned.

Producing clever designs, and paying every attention to historical accuracy in the reproduction of old designs for the decoration of rooms in certain styles, Messrs. Sanderson and Sons deserve the very high reputation they enjoy. With each successive season new ideas are realised with enterprise to meet the demand of the prevailing fashion, and the possibilities of wall-paper decoration become greater as the encouragement of success leads to continued endeavour. The scope is unlimited, because the harder manufacturers press towards the ideal wall-embellishment, the faster the ideal will evade them; it being of a will o' the wisp nature, which baffles complete attainment. And this is well; for unattainable perfection will always be an incentive to labour provided there is a sufficient reward for zeal to counteract despair.

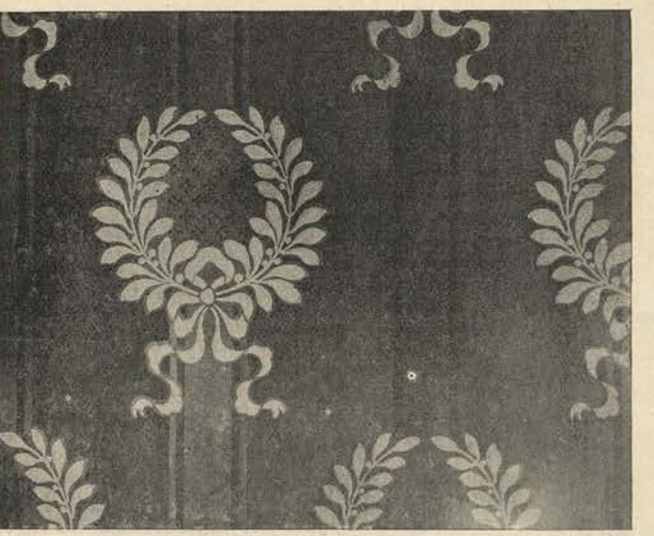
Block-printed Paper from Old Stencilled Flock Design. By Arthur Sanderson & Sons, Ltd.



"Canal" Frieze, by Arthur Sanderson & Sons, Ltd.



"Princess May" Design, by Arthur Sanderson & Sons, Ltd.



"Laurel Leaf" Design, by Arthur Sanderson & Sons, Ltd.

"Kremlin" Design, by Arthur Sanderson & Sons, Ltd.

"Belgrave" Design, by Arthur Sanderson & Sons, Ltd.

Royal Barum Ware.

THE potter, claiming for his craft antiquity unparalleled by other of the arts and deriving unlimited suggestion in design from the productions of his forerunners, can seldom create an uncommon form in clay which will appeal to the world as of original conception. However much the craftsman may strive to devise new shapes, which cannot be condemned as absurd, he will probably model objects, quite unwittingly, which have been produced by other hands at some period of history. The apprentice potter can therefore choose to adopt one of three available means to attain his consummation: (1) to conscientiously follow in the wheel-marks of his professional ancestors; (2) to combine the distinctive characteristics of some of his honoured predecessors; (3) to seek his fortune with a style of his own—a course possible once in a century or so but almost unmentionable on account of its rarity.

The first path is undoubtedly the best on which to tread. Given a resourceful mind, the designer can modify or extend the thoughts of the earlier craftsmen, embodying the excellences of the past with the requirements of the present; and he who would achieve greatness or increase his business must also anticipate the trend of the future. The competition of modern times makes essential the exhibition of work which will tempt purchase from those who, preferring to see before they buy, would never commission production.

It is an indication of the growth of appreciation that the purely artistic effort is becoming commercially profitable, and this is very noticeable in respect to Barum Pottery. The traditions of ceramic art are worthily fostered by Mr. C. H. Brannam, who, succeeding to a factory, by personal application has identified his skill with the district of North Devon, and by much quiet endeavour has given a renown to the town of Barnstaple equal almost to its association, under the name of Barum, with early English times.

One of the features of Barum Ware is the density of colour which is reached, and although this characteristic is not uncommon in ware manufactured in other parts of the world, yet Mr. Brannam achieves complete success in the selection of colour to convey just the right ornamental effect. Without being too solid, the tone is sufficiently heavy to dignify the piece, and, when relieved by other shades or colours, an effective composition is obtained. The illustrations here will show the contrasts, but the softness and the careful blending of the colours are only suggested. Barum Ware has been favourably noticed by Royalty, and the list of distinguished patrons who have become owners of pieces is a long one. Her late Majesty, Queen Victoria, commanded specimens of work to be submitted, and the ensuing orders were completed satisfactorily. It may be mentioned that besides the flower vases, jugs, cups, tobacco jars, bowls, and other receptacles made in the ordinary way, special commissions are speedily executed, coats-of-arms and monograms being burned into the pieces whenever desired. Considerable success has been obtained in this most difficult art, advantage having been taken of opportunities for the show of delicate handling in the representation of heraldic designs.

Barum Ware is of two kinds; the one which depends for effect on rich colouring and glaze, the other which is decorated in Sgraffiato, or modelled in low relief. The latter is an interesting process. A vessel of red clay (terra cotta) is covered with a coating of white slip, made of some natural white earth. When this bridal garment is set, portions of it are etched away in order to expose the red clay. In finishing, other colours are introduced into the design, and the result is a characteristic piece of Barum Ware. In the Victoria and Albert Museum, S. Kensington, there are many examples of the ancient employment of this Sgraffiato decoration. Incised ware, as produced in Perugia and Cyprus in about the fifteenth century, seems to have been very crude in execution; after making allowances for damage during excavation and for time decay, compared with modern work it appears inferior in workmanship. As regards embellishment, the variegation introduced now is much more brilliant, and keeping in mind the wonderful preservation of colour in the specimens of Egyptian and Grecian ceramic art which have been discovered, there is no reasonable cause to suppose that the productions of the present day will not rank in the future as works of art of the highest grade ever reached.

Some of the vases reproduced show the clever adaptation of animal forms to the construction and decoration of the pieces. The deft workmanship and anatomical knowledge which is necessary to enable a graceful ornament to appear, for instance, in the quaint form of a penguin is undeniable. For the information of posterity, the originals should be signed by their respective authors. In centuries to come, when the Directors of our National Museums are endeavouring to determine the date and authorship of the productions of the present day, it will be a far simpler task than it is for living archæologists, whose knowledge of the past is necessarily largely speculative owing to the lack of documentary evidence. There are many works of art of this description of sufficient merit to warrant the distinguishing mark of the artist being imprinted: if only for the enlightenment of future generations, the example of some eminent deceased potters should be followed.

There is an indication of a complete mastery of modelling in the representation of beasts in the different shapes which come from the Barum factory. No better

Examples of Barum Ware.
From the originals made by C. H. Brannam, Litchdon Street, Barnstaple.

tribute can be paid to the artists than to confess an irresistible impulse to crane the neck with a view to finding out where is the end of the animal so naturally twined round the vase and incorporated with it. Such ideas are, of course, not new; there are ornaments in the British Museum which show that similarly grotesque figures were fashionable in bygone days; but the imitation of old ideas to be acceptable must be true, and considerable skill in manipulation is apparent in the work under notice.

Visitors are cordially invited to witness the production of these works of art. Tourists will find an excursion well repaid, and American cousins when they "do" England should not fail to find their way to C. H. Brannam's Royal Barum Ware Factory, Litchdon Street, Barnstaple.

Examples of Barum Ware.
From the originals made by C. H. Brannam, Litchdon Street, Barnstaple.

An Artistic Inheritance. Copeland, late Spode.

MR. JEWITT traced the first mention of Josiah Spode to 1749, in which year he was employed by Whieldon, the celebrated potter associated with Wedgwood and others eminent in the art. In 1770 Spode entered into business at Stoke-on-Trent, and in 1797 William Copeland, for many years identified with Spode's Works, became a partner. The famous manufactory, having descended from generation to generation, is now continued under the title of Messrs. W. T. Copeland and Sons. It seems scarcely necessary to say more than this. With such a record of years during which world-wide eminence has been attained, the merits of the firm must be written down unquestioned: if any reference is made, respectful homage must be paid to those whose privilege it is to carry on the traditions of their family, and whose endeavours towards perfection in their art are the justification of their birthright.

In the early days of the partnership, the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV., visited Stoke to see the process of porcelain manufacture, and Mr. Spode was appointed Potter to His Royal Highness. King Edward, accompanied by the Queen, a few years ago also went over the works, and this Royal patronage is a tribute to the worth of Copeland ware, many specimens of which have from time to time passed into the Royal collections. In 1866 a dessert service consisting of 198 pieces passed into the possession of the King. The figures of the centrepiece were designed by J. Durham, A.R.A. and the whole production was on a scale of great magnificence.

The manufacture of sets of choice table appointments is a branch industry to which great attention is paid, and every endeavour is made to secure the best artistic issue. An unimpeachable finish is insisted upon before any piece leaves the manufactory, and in some of the results there is a close affinity to the delicate beauty of the glass-ware of the early Venetians. As regards design, there is a varied assortment of geometric and subject patterns, a selection from which can be made to satisfy the taste of all purchasers.

Copeland Ware.

In the decoration of vases and bowls, Messrs. Copeland have always shown praiseworthy refinement. The excellence of most of their original designs is only equalled by their imitation of the work of celebrated artists. The dainty touch of Watteau is transferred admirably to the "Cecil" vase here reproduced, and when it is recollected that on the way to completion each vase is subjected to many difficult processes, the most trivial failure in any of which means destruction, the results obtained are almost incredible. In the manufacture of jewelled porcelain some astonishingly fine effects are obtained. Copeland ware of all descriptions is the outcome of repeated experiments, and represents the concentrated skill and experience of many decades. It is to the interest of the artists employed to see that all the ware is satisfactorily finished, and this, combined with the vigilance of those responsible, makes Copeland ware beyond suspicion. Awards have been repeatedly

Copeland Ware. *Copeland Ware.* *Copeland Ware.*

obtained at Exhibitions and the high grade of the specimens of the potter's art which continually leave the works, ensure acceptability by their undoubted merit.

It may not be out of place to mention that before entering the factory a penalty is exacted from visitors. It being one of the show places of England, this penalty has been paid by many distinguished people. It consists of a Visitors' Book, to which each stranger is asked to contribute an autograph. In the year 1852, Charles Dickens went over the factory and recorded his impressions in "Household Words" under the title of "A Plated Article." Although since that time the business has been largely increased, it is interesting to note that many of the surroundings remain much the same; while his imaginary conversation with a manufactured plate embodies a description, in his own inimitable style, of the various processes.

Expert knowledge of the highest degree is applied to the manufacture of Copeland Ware. and the traditions of the Staffordshire Potteries are ambitiously carried on. The name of Copeland is linked with Stoke-on-Trent (the very name of which town is sufficient to warrant quality), while their name is an alternative word for excellence. To what further success they may attain it is impossible to predict. Whatever new ideas are worth consideration, Messrs Copeland are among the first to take advantage of them to improve the standard at the time existing. If in the production of some rare design they are so unfortunate as to fail to achieve the end they have in view, it has been repeatedly proved that the failure has only been an incentive to further endeavours. It is by this combination of perseverance and hereditary skill that so much has been accomplished towards the perfection of artistic pottery. Whatever commercial reward has been theirs, the student, to whom actual monetary worth does not appeal, rejoices to see such elegance in contemporary art. Copeland Ware deserves to be named with the choice pieces which at auction command high prices, and besides commanding admiration, the future may possess them with an added quality of appreciation in specie. Individual taste may perhaps not tend to unanimity on this point, but if anyone visits the works and fails to be at least moderately charmed by the beauty of the work shown, that visitor must be of the melancholy undiscerning order of humanity.

"Cecil" Pattern Vase, Copeland Ware.

The Concord of Sweet Sounds.

"IF music be the food of love, play on"—one of Brinsmead's pianos. It is with every deference to the immortal author of "Twelfth Night" that this particular instrument and make is suggested. What more amorous agent is there than a piano? Or what piano better qualified for its task than a Brinsmead? When the lover no longer hungers, prosaic melody is as readily forthcoming from the same instrument and satisfaction is inevitable. If it is desired to use the instrument as an elaborate piece of furniture, the achievements in this direction by Messrs. Brinsmead and Sons are too well known to need recapitulation. If everyone went to them for instruments, there would be none whose souls could be "fit for treasons, statagems and spoils"; for none could withstand the seductions of such music.

Wigmore Street is the scene of Messrs. Brinsmead's activity, and there pianos are sent direct from the works in Kentish Town. It may not be possible for all to enjoy an inspection of the various instruments on view at the show-rooms, and in order that musicians in the country may not be wholly deprived of the pleasure of knowing the products of Messrs. Brinsmead, an illustrated catalogue has been prepared which will reveal many new designs in casework, and some improvements in mechanical construction. Those who are interested should write for the booklet as early as possible as the demand is great and the supply limited.

A Brinsmead Sheraton Grand.

Motherhood. Zeal. Justice. Fortitude. Sympathy. Industry. Brotherhood.

Photo. Hollyer. *The Westminster Abbey Memorial to Henry Fawcett (B. 26 Aug. 1833, D. 6 Nov. 1884). By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.*

Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

AT HOME AND AT WORK.

I.

NO artist has been more sought after by writers for the Press than Mr. Alfred Gilbert. The literary chronicler as well as the professional and the unprofessional critic have found him singularly reticent, which has been regretfully commented upon by distinguished editors who have only desired to do honour to his art. Gilbert's uncommunicative reception of their overtures for information of a personal character has arisen from no vain sense of his own importance. It is the outcome of a constitutional disinclination to be made the subject of journalistic comment or *réclame*, and a fastidious depreciation of his own work; a kind of modesty which is not common in these days, when the spirit of commercialism is so generally recognised as an almost necessary factor of success in every walk of life. The privilege of an intimate friendship, affording me opportunities of understanding his character and observing the variety of his artistic labours and his enjoyment of life, in spite of the many clouds that have lowered upon his house, has been to me a delightful experience; and when the Editor of THE ART JOURNAL despaired of being enabled to pay to Gilbert's genius the tribute of a special number, in which Sculpture had yet to be honoured, I ventured into the breach, and have never been engaged upon a pleasanter though more difficult task.

The romance of a great man's life is not easy of narration in his own day. A certain reserve, that never belongs to obituary memoirs, restrains the expression of one's admiration and tones down the romance of personal achievement, in order that the narrative may not offend the susceptibilities of the living hero. At the same time it may be permitted to a writer, who is rather laying in a sketch of an eventful life than attempting an essay in biography, to take frank note of its shadow as well as its sunshine. It may truly be said for Mr. Alfred Gilbert that he has fought his way to the head of his profession through disabilities that would have killed many a less determined student, and who, in his ardent worship of the Ideal and the Beautiful, and in his efforts to realise what he conceives to be his duty to the Art he loves, has preferred comparative penury to a life of affluent luxury that might have rewarded an adaptation of his genius to the sordid temptations of a commonplace commercialism. His story up to the present is that of one who has lived the life of the humble student in Paris, Rome and Florence; and at the age of a year or two over thirty, attaining the height of his ambition, so far as a spacious studio in London with complete appliances for the practice of his art was concerned, to fall from that high estate, financially, at what the Art world considered to be the zenith of his fame. One day with a courageous heart he turned his back upon his fallen fortunes to find a new home. This was to be in Bruges, as he

The Broken Shrine.—By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

thought. But the temporary resting-place which he had secured there was, for the time being, superseded in a way that suggests romance rather than the prose of real life. From the Maida Vale house, labelled with the *affiches* of the auctioneer, he moved into a Royal palace. Their Majesties the King and Queen of England, hearing of his misfortune, commanded him to make a statue of Her Gracious Majesty the Queen, and gave him a studio and suite of apartments in Windsor Castle. This and his reception by their Majesties is in the nature of a chapter from a fairy tale. While certain of his contemporaries were lamenting his financial collapse, they would probably have almost elected to undergo a similar experience for the reward of such practical and human sympathy from the Royal host and hostess of Windsor Castle.

Handle of Seal.
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.
By permission of Lady de Vesci.

Having regard to the fine statue of Queen Victoria, which set a new fashion in the treatment of draperies in marble and bronze, there is every reason to look forward to another masterpiece in the portrait of Her Majesty Queen Alexandra, upon which Mr. Gilbert is at the present time engaged. No less courtly in his manner than his English patron, the late Lord Leighton, Gilbert was a favourite with her late Majesty, who honoured him with many privileges. He is understood to have asked the Queen, upon the occasion of her visit to his studio in the early days of his work on the Clarence memorial, to permit his mother to witness his interview with Her Majesty, which was graciously granted.

An enthusiast who puts himself into his work, an artist who sees the human as well as the spiritual side of an artistic subject, and whose work appeals to the tenderest sympathies of the heart, Mr. Alfred Gilbert, if I may judge by their recorded opinions, also satisfies the highest canons of the travelled and the disciplined critic. If I were a master of "the gay science," I think I should feel that in his very excellence would lie my greatest difficulty as a commentator. It is easier to find fault than to dwell continually upon the perfections of a picture, a statue, or a book; though it has been well said that the first qualification of a critic is sympathy. In his lectures, in his life, and in his work Mr. Gilbert preaches the duty of reverence, humility, and high endeavour.

An enemy to mere convention, his own modest estimate of his greatest achievements inspired me with courage to undertake a task for which my appreciation of the artist is my only justification. If I regard him from the point of view of the novelist, who builds his story and develops the character of his hero upon the basis of truth; or should I exercise the simpler art of the journalist in providing text to carry the accompanying pictures, and converse with him on the lines of that delightful book of Medwin's, "Conversations with Lord Byron," I can hardly fail to interest the reader. It has often struck me as more or less of a paradox that Gilbert's symbolism never seems to lose touch of a certain human simplicity that would realise to the least trained intellect the full significance and beauty of his highest work of imagination. I have never met with such abundant fancy, or an artist so lavishly inspired with the power to represent an idea in symbolic form. While lifting a subject to the supremest platform of poetic imagination, he has the subtle power of linking it with a reality that brings the noblest art down to the humblest understanding. You find this in everything he has ever done—from a brooch to a drinking cup, from an official chain of office to the centre-piece for a great Queen's table, from a baptismal font to an altar-screen, from a domestic group to that magnificent memorial of the Duke of Clarence, which may be said to have almost exhausted the resources of his art, and made no small tax upon his physical strength.

In the old days a work of such magnitude would have been considered enough for the achievement of a lifetime. But this is an age of rapid and extensive production; and he who lives for his art, and whose ambition is not checked by the desire for carriages and horses and country estates and social distinction, must work slower than his more worldly brother, to whom these possessions are of primary consideration. Genius at its best needs the backing of persistent industry, in no branch of work more so than in that of the sculptor and the artificer in metals. Conception is one thing, realisation another. The very endowment of a fine imagination in the plastic arts demands the trained manipulation of the expert whose handicraft is not outdistanced by his fancy. This remarkable combination is found in the works of Alfred Gilbert. That which the great old masters possessed Gilbert has achieved—a versatility too little appreciated in our day. If you have ever spent an hour or two at the Musée Plantin at Antwerp you will understand what I mean. There you find examples in various directions by such masters as Rubens, Teniers, and Van Dyck in the graphic arts. Versatility in modern days has been so discounted by the triumphs of machinery that it has come to be decried as weakness rather than strength in every branch of art and learning.

Photo. Hollyer. *Head of a Girl.*
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.
A Study in the possession of Luke Fildes, Esq., R.A.

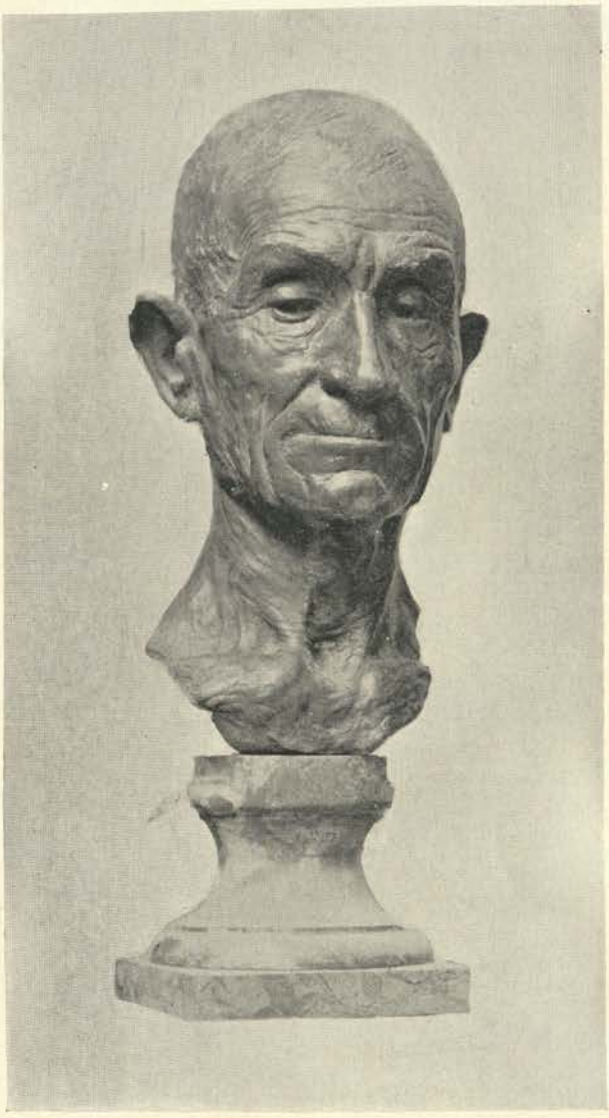
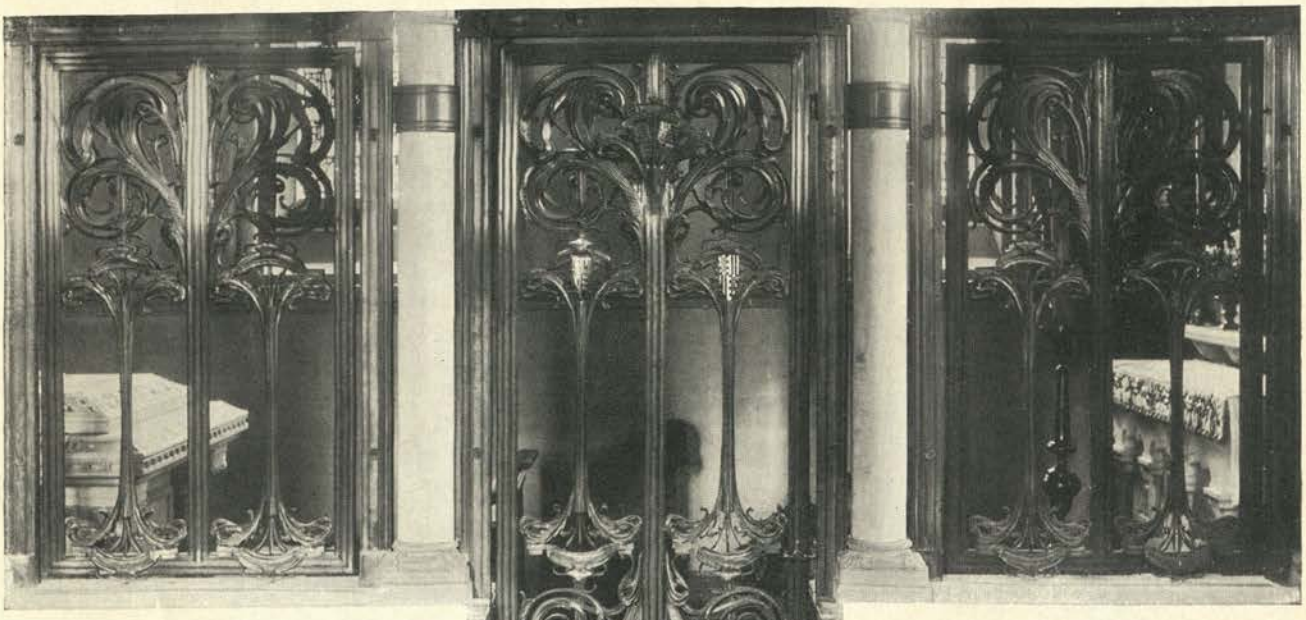


Photo. Hollyer. *Study of the Head of a Capri Fisherman.*
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.
By permission of J. P. Heseltine, Esq.



"This screen is erected to the dear memory of her beloved son-in-law, Prince Henry of Battenberg, by Victoria R.I., 1897."

Screen, in Whippingham Church, to the Memorial Chapel of the late Prince Henry of Battenberg.

By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

Photo. Kirk.

The commonplace and misleading proverb, "Let the cobbler stick to his last," has been applied even to the ambition of the rarest intellects, though we have continual evidence that versatility in the arts is the concomitant of genius. I have seen Gilbert working with the tools of the artificer in metals, and with no less delight than when engaged in modelling a statue or labouring with mallet and chisel on a block of marble. "He is as good a workman as any of us," said a monumental mason to me one day. And, "There's no man defter at a bit of metal work, either as designer or executor," said an expert in that line when speaking of the exquisite Mayoral chain of Preston. To these passing tributes I might add the evidence of a multitude of witnesses from the critical press and the lecture platform. I prefer to quote from "British Sculpture and Sculptors of To-day," by Mr. M. H. Spielmann, the following appreciative condensation of them, which is not a criticism, but a record: "The position of Mr. Gilbert in the art world of England has long since been proclaimed by his brother-artists and accepted by the public. Their admiration, which is born of sober judgment, has set him on a pedestal so high that his work as a whole is almost beyond the range of outside criticism, even as his reputation is beyond harm and attack. The enthusiasm with which his name is everywhere received and his work welcomed amongst artists and connoisseurs is the result of no sudden vogue, but of a deliberate verdict after critical examination. Rarely has a man in the whole history of art burst upon the world with a message of hope conveyed in more splendid achievement, and so gallantly maintained the position at the very front of his profession. Alfred Gilbert's name stands alone as one who has preached in his work a great movement, and in less than a decade effected, more than any other man, the salvation of the English school, and influenced for good, quite as much as M. Dalou, most of the young sculptors of the country."

Photo. Carter. *The Preston Chain: Small Dress Collar. By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.*

II.

Art is a jealous mistress, and Gilbert has denied her nothing. Often when he had not satisfied her punctilious demands, he has broken his work and began it afresh, or in its costly decoration has put more precious metal into it than the patron for whom he had laboured would ever be asked to pay. This may seem Quixotic, but the wings of Gilbert's art are never clogged with gold; they soar. The Piccadilly fountain, the beauty of which grows upon even the ordinary citizen, cost Gilbert several thousand pounds more than his contract with the

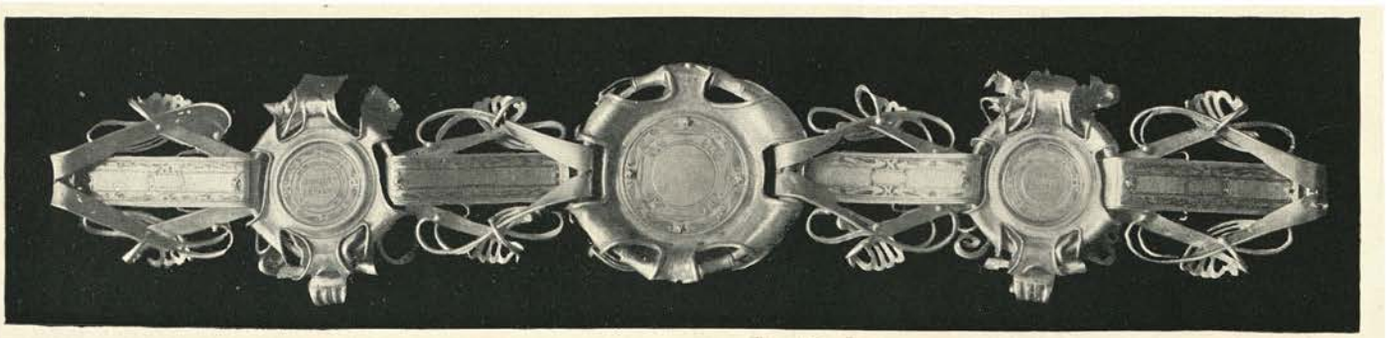


Photo. Hollyer. *The Preston Chain: Elevation. By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.*

authorities. And what an unappreciative body these authorities appear to be! Here is a fine piece of work—a fountain, and they keep it without water; a fountain designed as a public ornament, the main scheme of which is concerned with the artistic treatment of water; and all that we are permitted to see of this feature of the artistic idea is a portion of its lower lines, the upper part of the fountain remaining as dry as the imagination of the London County Council, the basin a puddle for the *gamin* of the streets, and the steps a slovenly flower market. No one would desire to drive the flower women from this coign of vantage, nor rob them of their characteristic shawls and baskets; but somebody should be responsible for the decent order of the place; it should not be strewn with scraps of paper, nor the pedestal defiled with dirt. The aspirations of English artists cannot be said to find much encouragement in the treatment which the most earnest attempt at street ornamentation in our public memorials has received at the hands of the authorities. You need not spend laborious days nor seek for inspiration at Rome and Florence, to be enabled to produce effigies of men in frock-coats which to the cultivated mind add new terrors to death. Many of the statues that look down upon the passing crowd in our great cities are little better than ordinary stonemason's work; and yet what a tumult of ignorant criticism the fountain at Piccadilly excited! I have enlarged upon this theme in a later chapter, in which will also be found a brief *résumé* of the curious history of the much discussed memorial, by the sculptor himself (p. 13).

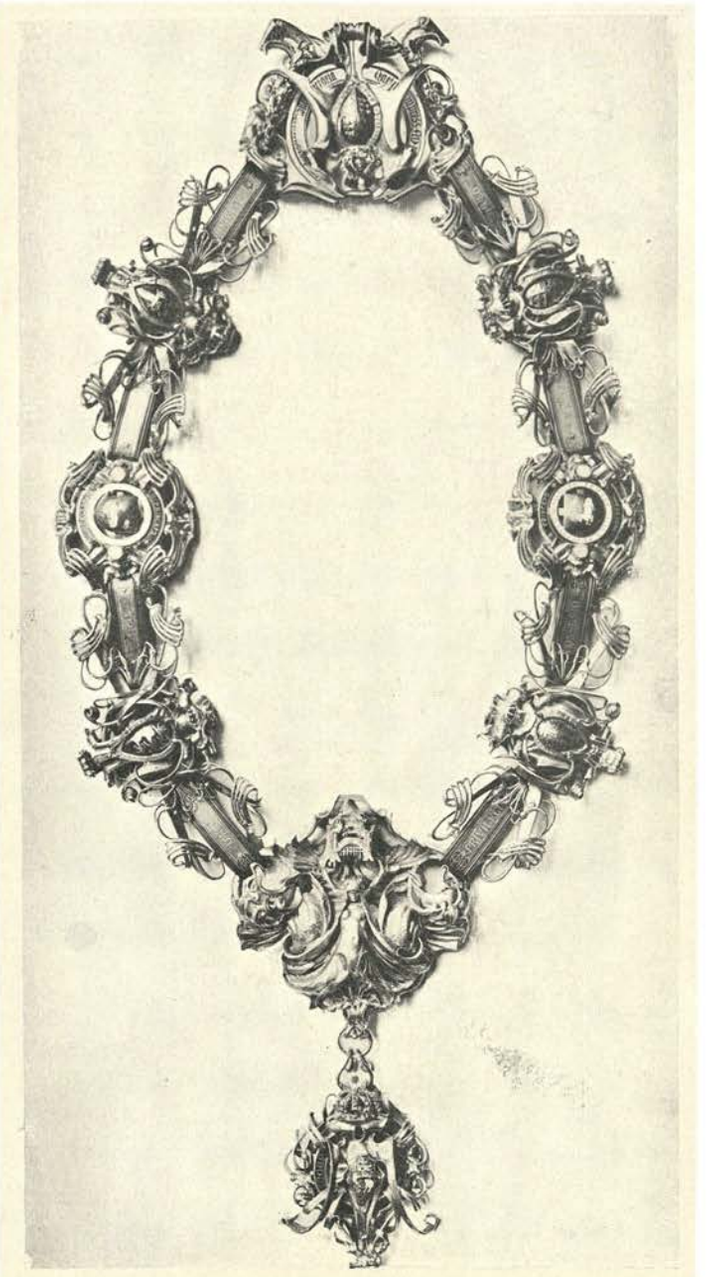
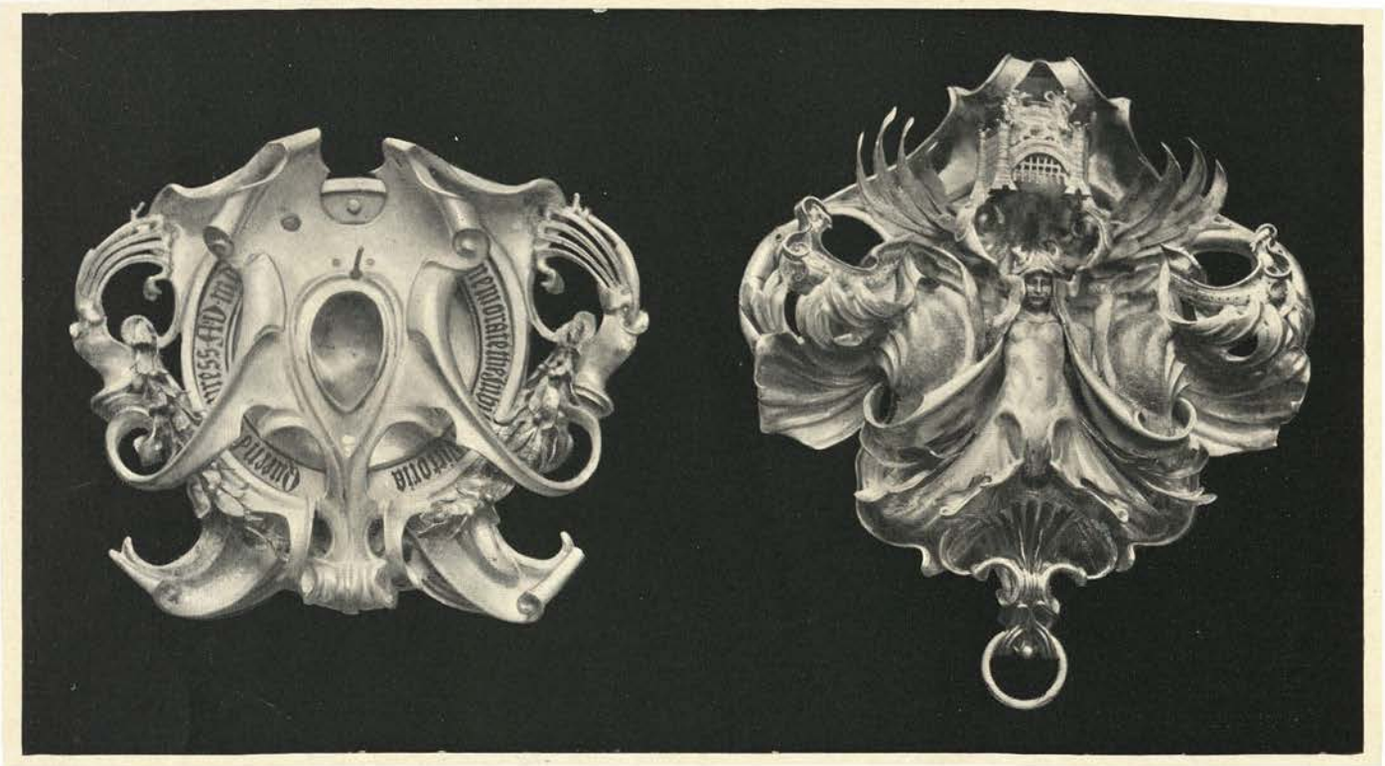


Photo. Carter. *The Preston Chain complete.*
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

Mr. Gilbert's mother sat for the Queen's robe of the Winchester statue (p. 8), and the sculptor's clay sketch of it was moulded with the speed of hot iron on the anvil. In a direction altogether different, but notable by way of comparison, Gilbert is as quick and facile in making a sketch with clay as Doré was in pencil studies for a black and white drawing; and I have seen them both at work. "The strong points of Mr. Gilbert's statue of Victoria, speaking generally," says one of his critics, "are its nobility, its freedom from conventionality, its concentrated richness of arrangement, and the fine design that lurks in all its details. The second of these qualities is conspicuous in the treatment of the Queen's robe, which has nothing in common with the usual blankety emptiness. The complex unity of the conception is nowhere more striking than in the arrangement by which the Queen's head, with its cap and crownlet, is surmounted by a second crown, imperial in form and colossal in size, and also by a sort of irregular chaplet of leaves, without the least appearance of crowding or accident. Finally, the thought lavished by the sculptor on his episodes, as we may call them, is shown by the presence at the back of the throne of a small

Photo. Hollyer. *The Preston Chain: Section.*
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.



Back centre of Badge. *(Photo. Hollyer.)* *Front centre of Badge.*

The Preston Chain in course of execution.
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

'Britannia,' which we do not fear to call one of the happiest creations of our modern school" (p. 8).

III.

All the more that the palatial studio and home which Gilbert built for himself no longer belongs to him, I recall the many pleasant hours I have spent there and the wonderful procession of art treasures that I have seen pass through my host's hands. Altar-pieces typifying the story of the Sacrament; fonts that now adorn distant churches; romances of history represented in official chains of office; brooches with legends in the heart of them; portraits of dead heroes of Science and Philanthropy who live again in his marble; figures for cathedral walls that seemed to sanction with a pathetic sign-manual the yearning hope and belief of man's immortality. I recall under that hospitable roof in Maida Vale glee and madrigal parties, when the old English ballads were sung by a society of which my host was president and his

Working model in plaster for one of the corners of a casket for the late Baron Huddleston.

By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

father the musicianly conductor; I recall little dinners with Bohemian guests, who loved Art for its own sake and talked of it with a loving freedom and reverence for its masters; I recall the welcoming home of the sculptor's sailor sons from the high seas—the younger in the merchant service, working hard for promotion, the elder already, though a mere boy, a lieutenant in the Navy, and possessing the Benin medal; I recall many another scene of simple domesticity, and of family reunions, and the elder daughter of the house busy with her mother, considering the dress in which she was to have the honour of being presented to Queen Victoria. As these remembrances recur to me, more particularly in regard to the transfer of work in the clay from the studio to the foundry, or dainty trifles of souvenirs in gold or silver to their fortunate owners, I see them sentinelled by the angel at the feet of the dead Prince, who is lying in sleeping effigy on the tomb which will immor-

talise, at the same time, the Duke of Clarence and the sculptor, and mark the present as an epoch in the history of English art. In the most festive times of my recollections of the Maida Vale house I recall that the angel and the Prince were reverently enwrapped and screened from view, "as some sacred shrine behind cathedral grille." One could not have been inclined to mirth in the shadow of so solemn a work. Many a time the vocal strains of the choral club of which I have spoken were in harmony with the eloquent message of the winged figure on the unseen tomb.

Photo. Hollyer; from the working model.

Memorial Candelabrum to Lord Arthur Russell, at Chenies, Bucks.

By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

FROM 'THE KISS OF VICTORY' TO 'COMEDY AND TRAGEDY.'

I.

I have mentioned Medwin's "Conversations of Lord Byron" as one of the most delightful, and I may add realistic, examples of biographical essays. It is what would to-day be called a series of "Interviews." Boswell's "Life of Johnson" is one continuous interview of the famous lexicographer, and the principal charm of "Pepys' Diary" lies in its interviews of famous persons, varied by introspective conversations with himself. In the estimation of fastidious critics, the term "Interview" has been somewhat vulgarised in our day by its use in connection with more or less irresponsible and hasty conversations for the ordinary newspaper, though the chronicles of journalism as well as our literature enshrine many an important human document in the perhaps unhappily named "Interview." Accepting this form of essay, as well as its undoubted applicability to what may be called biographical reminiscence, I think it desirable to give the reader this cue to my method, feeling that he will be none the less indulgent that, while falling far short of my model, I have by Medwin's inspiration given the reader a closer insight into the sub-

Photo. Hollyer; from the working model.

Memorial Font to the son of the 4th Marquis of Bath.

By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

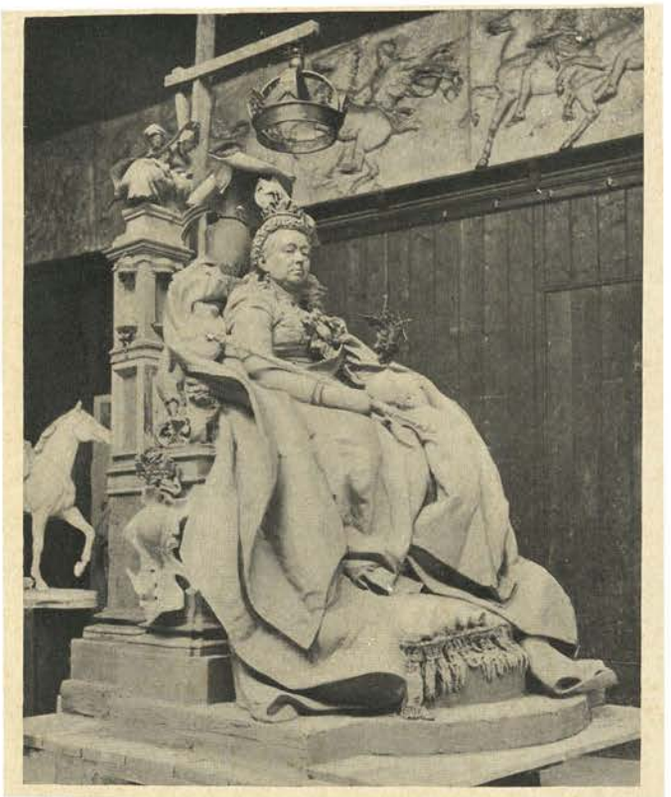


Photo. Hollyer; from the study in plaster.

The Winchester Statue to Queen Victoria (*p.* 5 *and plate*).
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

ject of my sketch than if I had attempted the severer art of the didactic essayist. The biographer who makes his subject talk, and who keeps his own personality as far in the background as possible, is, I take it, the best expositor of another man's life and work.

If it had occurred to me during the past few years to treat my intercourse with Alfred Gilbert as matter for ultimate publication, I should have made many interesting notes with a volume in view. But such reminiscences would have been chronicles of confidential intercourse between the acts of his own work and mine, and on my side always with profit. Moreover, if I had attempted to record Gilbert's many passing flights of imagination, his incidents of student life in Paris, his work under difficulties in Rome, and transferred to the cold pages of a notebook his cheerful optimism, his courageous pursuit of his ambition, his utter disregard of every other object than that of devoted worship at the shrine of the highest Art, and his despair at ever reaching his ideal, yet at the same time his delight at being at least on the road thither, I should have been a mere diarist instead of a deeply interested companion. One evening, however, some time after I had undertaken to prepare this essay, I said, "Now, we must really talk about your work from a personal point of view for the purpose of my ART JOURNAL record."

"Well, put me through the ordeal in your own way," he said. "I have recently passed through the most trying one that Fate could possibly have arranged for me, in one of those courts where they deal severely with mundane facts and figures that men post up in ledgers. I went through those inquisitionary fires so successfully that your sympathetic interrogatories from the standpoint of literary professionalism promise, by comparison, only an agreeable awakening of reminiscences—not all of them unpleasant. When looking back over difficulties and obstacles surmounted one is surprised that we took them so seriously. Memory has a comforting way of healing old wounds, and strewing flowers upon paths that, in the long ago, seemed to be thick with thorns and dark with pitfalls."

And so we drifted into our reminiscent chat.

"What you would call my first ambitious essay," said the Sculptor, "was 'The Kiss of Victory.' In regard to my previous efforts M. Cavallier told me I had better make boots, in which occupation I should be more profitably employed than in making sculpture. Opposition is often a good stimulus to exertion. After I had been away from school, at work in an out-of-the-way corner of Paris, I brought M. Cavallier a sketch of this first great endeavour, 'The Kiss of Victory.' He examined it critically. I had been anxious to work in Rome, and a question as to my quitting Paris for that purpose had elicited that freezing reply about making boots. 'Shall I go to Rome?' I asked, after he had examined my sketch. 'Yes,' he said; 'go to Rome, and carry out your design.' This was the first time

Photo. Rider.

The Winchester Statue to Queen Victoria (*see plate*): *View showing the figure of Britannia* (*p.* 5).
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

Jubilee Medal executed for the Art Union of London. By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

he had ever been kind to me, and he kissed me on both cheeks. I am not tall, but Cavallier had to reach up to embrace me.

"Well, I went to Rome with my wife and two children, little more than tickets for the train in my pocket. We had had a hard time in Paris; but it had its bright side. It is wonderful how happy, and how miserable, you may be in a couple of rooms, with a few francs. I went to Rome trusting to get work enough to enable me at the same time to carry out the idea of which Cavallier had so cordially, and I might say sentimentally, approved.

"The work itself was the outcome of a dream. I was three years in Paris, too poor to go to the Salon and see the exhibition. A fellow student told me he had seen there a beautiful group, which, I believe, was supposed to be by Doré. He could not describe it, but said he thought its title was 'Le Baiser de la Gloire' ('The Kiss of Glory'). The title appealed to me so much that I could not get it out of my head until I had made a sketch as the idea had shaped itself in my mind. I determined, however, that I would go the next day and see the group in the Salon. Meanwhile, that night I dreamt that I had seen it, and I left my bed to touch up my sketch from the point of view of my dream. On the next day I went to the Salon and saw the actual thing, which was so different from my sketch that I determined to carry out my idea, so enamoured was I of the subject. I may remark that Doré's chief figure was the familiar one of the French soldier of the period, with his chassepot. I was three years trying to execute the work. I had been enabled to rent a studio and work upon it through a commission for its completion from Mr. Somerset Beaumont. I had already finished the clay model when my wife fell seriously ill, and I had to take her away from Rome and leave my model, to find it on my return all fallen to pieces. In two successive years the same thing happened. At last it was finished, I myself having carved it in marble, in the course of which I entirely remodelled it; and finally delivered it, a somewhat tardy return, I fear, for Mr. Beaumont's kindness."

The fastidiousness of the artist in revising his model while completing it with his own hand in the marble was no doubt, however, considered by Mr. Beaumont a sufficient appreciation of his useful commission.

"By this time," continued my host, "I had grown tired of French influence, in which I felt my own individuality was overshadowed. I availed myself of an opportunity to visit Florence, and there it was that the scales fell from my eyes. I saw, for the first time in my life, the works of the fathers of the Renaissance; and I was struck by the absolute independence and freedom of thought and truthful representation of the ideas they

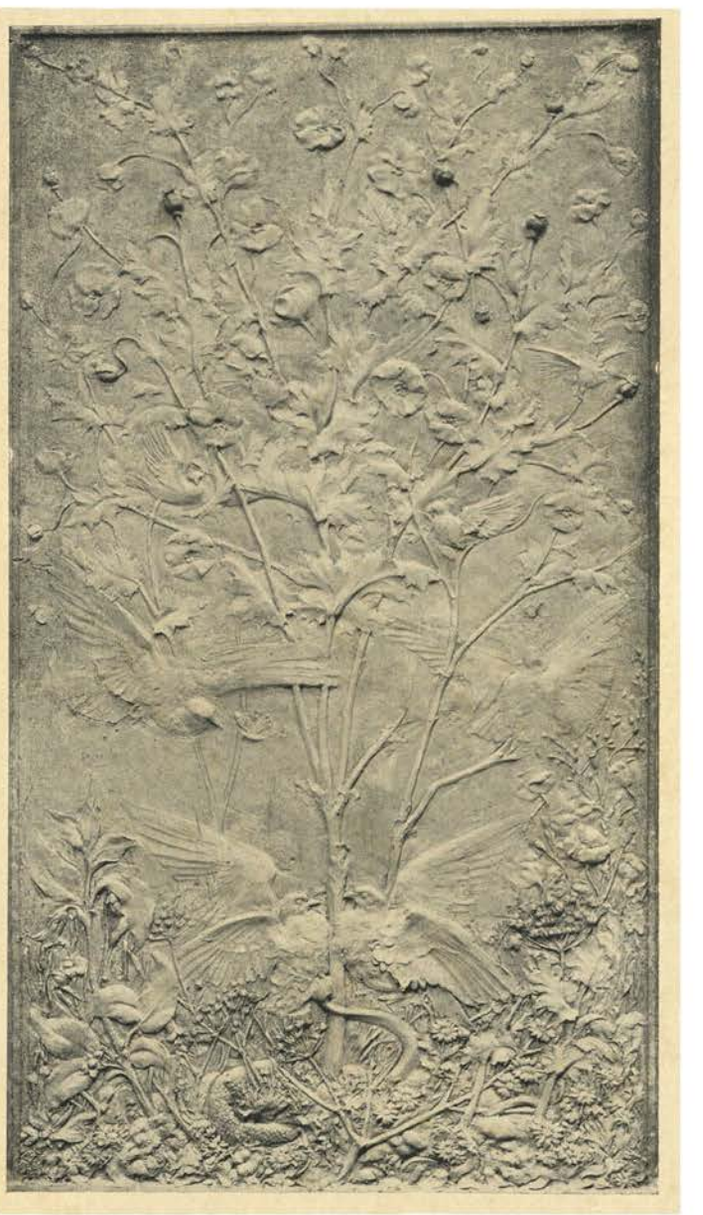


Photo. Hollyer; from the model in plaster.

Bronze Memorial in Glasgow Cathedral to the memory of William Graham of Burntshields, Renfrewshire.

By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

Photo. Hollyer.

'Perseus Arming' (*p.* 10).
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.
By permission of J. P. Heseltine, Esq.

possessed. So impressed was I with the fact that their representations were not mere photographs, but yet so true to Nature, that they seemed to reveal to me what I then understood as style, and which I have since learnt to regard as the expression of an individuality. 'The style is the man himself,' as Buffon says; and I think it was Chesterfield who added, 'Style is the dress of thoughts.' Well, I returned to Rome, and at once set to work to make a statuette called 'Perseus Arming' (p. 10). The reason I chose the subject was, that from evidence I had witnessed in Florence of the choice of subjects, I had become convinced that after all there might be nothing more original as to a subject for artistic treatment than the banal or old-time story; but that in its exposition every story has two sides—the one being the accepted and literal text, and the other that which the text suggests. After seeing the wonderful and heroic statue by Cellini, amazed as I was by that great work, it still left me somewhat cold, insomuch that it failed to touch my human sympathies. As at that time my whole thoughts were of my artistic equipment for the future, I conceived the idea that Perseus before becoming a hero was a mere mortal, and that he had to look to his equipment. That is a presage of my life and work at that time. And I think the wing still ill-fits me, the sword is blunt, and the armour dull as my own brain . . . . But now comes the astonishing thing about this figure. I sent it to the Salon; it was accepted, and obtained for me honourable mention. This gave me great encouragement to continue the task I had set myself—that was, to go on writing my own history by symbol.

"The next figure was Icarus (p. 10), a commission from Mr. Leighton, afterwards President of the Royal Academy, and, at his lamented death, Lord Leighton. This was more difficult than the Perseus, because I had set myself the task not only of making a realistic representation of the human figure, but had also made up my mind to execute it from start to finish with my own hands; thus it was the first casting in bronze that I had made myself. It was said to be a great success. Mr. Leighton approved of it. And here the symbol comes in again—the human side of my mythical story; Icarus, prepared to fly, sees at his feet, before throwing himself from the rock, a bird with its natural means of flight strangled by a crawling thing, a snake!—a presage of our life."

II.

Gilbert, who is not altogether unconventional in his worldly views of life, and who in conversation treats its mysteries and superstitions with the cold analysis of a student and investigator, is nevertheless moved as few men are by their very influences. He probably does not think he is a fatalist; but he is, and sees clearly in his own mind a continual forecasting of his destiny. This strangling of the bird by the snake he takes to be another symbol, not merely of life in general, but as especially applicable to his own.

"Well?" I say presently, interrupting a passing reflection.

"Where was I?" he asks.

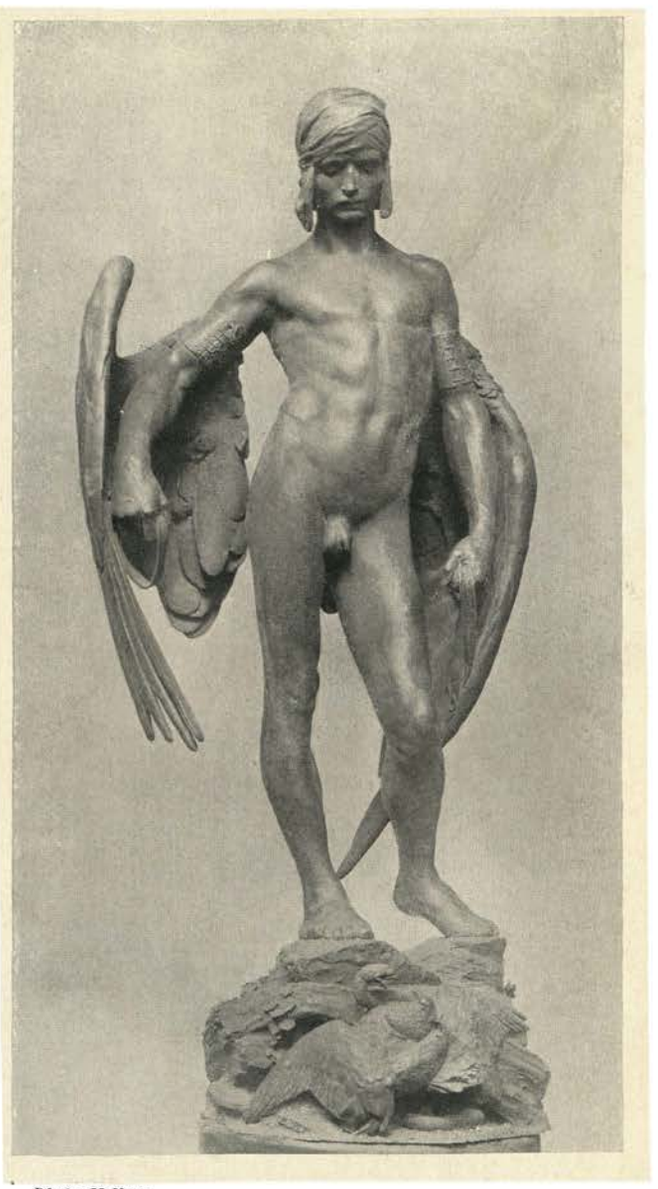


Photo. Hollyer.

Icarus (*p.* 10).
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

"With that symbol of annihilated hope and ambition at the feet of Icarus," I reply.

"Oh, yes. Well, in the intervals of that little story I was working at no end of studies in Rome; much plain living and much high thinking, after the manner of certain intellectual Scotchmen; but in a delightful atmosphere of art and sunshine, among needy artists like myself. Don't you think that after all our happiest memories are those of our novitiate on bread and herbs? . . . Eventually I left Rome for London; and what first of all struck me most was my success—success with what I considered incomplete work; and my second impression was the possible reason for my incompleteness. While my success puzzled though it elated me, my shortcomings were a quick and emphatic revelation. I had made a statuette, but its pedestal, to my horror, was a mere carpenter's job, made for an exhibition. At once I felt the necessity of taking a further lesson, or, rather, of picking up one which I had failed to seize from the Florentines. I awoke to the conviction that they had not made the pedestals to their figures for nothing. For the first time I realised the value of these adjuncts, which I had passed by unheeded during my first lesson in Florence (p. 26). I noticed that my statuette of Icarus was a fitting reminder of my incompleteness through his hesitancy. This lesson revolutionised the whole train of my thoughts. Being unwilling to copy or steal the method of ornament I had so strangely neglected, I set myself a new task, the hardest task of my life, which some day may bear fruit.

"Then came the statue of 'The Enchanted Chair' (p. 11), which was entirely suggested by my dreams of hope and my desire at that time to break away from mere material and matter-of-fact expression in my art: an attempt to incorporate life with realistic representation and the romantic side, which in painting always holds good, and in sculpture is too often conspicuous by its absence. Here I received a very severe check, for I was pronounced too picturesque in my ideal. This statue of 'The Enchanted Chair,' only executed in plaster, I broke, having kept it by me to the last hour of my quitting my Maida Vale studio, when it shared the fate of my own undoing. At the same time I destroyed many other incomplete works. I could not bear the idea of their going into strange hands, whose owners might have different views from mine, and have gone so far as to have them completed by other sculptors. My next work after 'The Enchanted Chair' was the fountain at Piccadilly Circus, a most uncompromisingly realistic piece of work, and my first effort in ornament.

Photo. Hollyer; from the study in plaster.

The Enchanted Chair (*p.* 11).

By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

III.

"All these things carry out the cycle of the story which culminates in the statuette of 'Comedy and Tragedy,' when I began to see breakers ahead; it was really the climax to my cycle of stories. It had, however, a fair success. It was spoken of as being cynical. It represents a boy carrying a comic mask. He is stung by a bee—the symbol of Love. He turns, and his face becomes tragic (p. 12). The symbol is in reality fact. I was stung by that bee, typified by my love for my art, a consciousness of its incompleteness; my love was not sufficient. I saw trouble ahead of me. . . . . Shall I tell you how I came to think of this subject of the boy and the bee?"

"By all means," I answer, delighted to find my friend responding to the promptings of his own thoughts and reminiscences instead of being led on to talk by my suggestions.

"I was living a kind of double life at that time, enjoying the society of Irving and Toole and other famous and pleasant members of the Garrick Club, going to the theatre at night, and with Tragedy in my private life, living my Comedy publicly, if not enjoying it. Among my happiest memories has been the society of men occupied in branches of art other than my own, and the pleasure has also been a source of education. At the time I am thinking of a one-act play was being enacted at the Lyceum called 'Comedy and Tragedy,' by a namesake of mine, Mr. W. S. Gilbert, with Miss Mary Anderson in the leading *rôle*. I think the little piece was almost a monologue. Attracted

by the title of the piece in much the same way as I was attracted to Doré's 'Kiss of Glory,' I went to see it, and was so deeply impressed that I went night after night. The dramatic fable with which the play inspired me gave me no idea of how to treat it in plastic form, and yet the subject haunted me. Always having the Theatre in my mind I conceived the notion of harking back to the old Greek stage upon which masks were always worn, and I conceived a kind of stage property boy rushing away in great glee with his comedy mask, and on his way being stung by a bee. This was the only way in which I could present the hidden pain and passion of the boy. I confess that I had to resort to rather adventitious methods to convey my meaning; and, indeed, I now look upon such methods as more or less legitimate tricks. The youth, seen from one position through the open mouth of the comic mask, exhibits an expression of hilarity, but from the opposite view he is seen glancing at his wounded leg, and his expression assumes one of pain and sadness."

'Comedy and Tragedy' (*p.* 11).
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.
By permission of J. P. Heseltine, Esq.

Then, after a moment's reflection, he adds, "And, surely, that is a symbol of our lives; it certainly is of mine, or was at the time"—a piece of unconscious egotism which is a phase of the sincerest modesty. The reader will observe how, in Gilbert's views of his work, this revelation of himself, his ambition, his methods of work, his idealistic realism—if I may use such a term—have to do with his own personality; and it seems to me that you will find this kind of individuality underlying the creations of genius in every branch of art. The same may also be said of the great actor who, though as a rule merely the interpreter of other men's ideas, becomes little short of a creator when his artistic impersonation lifts a character beyond the text he is reading, as in the case of the Mathias of Sir Henry Irving in "The Bells," which is not the Mathias of M. Coquelin, but the burgomaster of Erckmann-Chatrian dealised into that of the dreamer and the poet, justified by the criminal's perception of the pathos of the tragedy in which he is engaged—the howling of the dogs at Daniel's farm, the crying of little Annette, and later, the haunting sound of the bells on the Jew's horse, and his eventual death through the acuteness of his fearful imagination. M. Coquelin, a comedian of deserved fame, in his interpretation of the character evidently only saw one side of the burgomaster's story. Irving—to quote an aphoristic remark in a previous conversation with Gilbert—sees two, and the result is practically a creation inspired by the original hero of the impressive fiction. If this view of creative power is a little strained when submitted to the severe logic of analytical criticism, Irving's superb art and his all-round appreciation and skill of stagecraft should be its ample warrant.

Considering the evanescent character of the actor's art, one likes to feel that there are exceptions to the rule which denies the status of artist to the man who is not himself a creator, but only an interpreter. Many an author has been amazed on discovering how much of suggestion a great actor has found in his work that he had not even dreamt of; and of course, on the other hand, many an author has suffered deep mortification on finding how little he has been understood by the actors who have undertaken to impersonate his characters. But there are actors and actors, and to-day the art of acting is not generally what it meant to the masters whose portraits decorate the rooms of the Garrick Club, nor what it means to the few men of our day who were trained in the old school of the stock companies. There are compensations, no doubt, in the general perfection of the scenic presentation of plays in our day which have given intense satisfaction to masters and students of the graphic arts generally. Sir Henry Irving set the example of annexing for the completeness of his presentations every branch of art, and other actor-managers have followed in his footsteps with distinction and success. First nights at the Lyceum used to attract not only

'Comedy and Tragedy' (*p.* 11).
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.
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the students of the Royal Academy, but the leading Academicians and Associates. If the Theatre to-day can hardly be said to be any longer a school of manners and elocution, it is at any rate a very fine gallery of pictures, with what may be called occasional "side shows" of real life and delightful glimpses of fairyland. With the great number of theatres in the present day our best actors are scattered among numerous companies. If a manager might have the privilege of casting Shakespeare and the old comedies from among the "stars" in our extended theatrical firmament, I have no doubt he could give representations of the poetic drama worthy of the best days of the London and provincial stage. At the same time it must be confessed that the commercialism of the syndicate era of management is at present exercising a degrading influence on one of the most beautiful combinations of the varied arts of the dramatist and his interpreters. . . . If I seem to have been unduly led away from the main subject of this essay in these references to the stage, I might quote the influence of Gilbert, one of whose chief delights, and also one of whose best remembered inspirations, are associated with the playhouse. I have never seen a spectator accept the conditions of the acting of a stage-play with more sincerity or pleasure. Moreover, he is as great an admirer of Irving as an actor as he is of the work of his illustrious namesake, Sir John Gilbert; and there is a special appropriateness in these references to Sir Henry Irving in the illustration of Mr. Gilbert's tribute of the silver bell designed as a birthday gift to the impersonator of Mathias in the Erckmann-Chatrian drama (p. 13).

Photo. Hollyer.

The "Irving" Bell (p. 13).
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.
A personal gift from the artist to Sir Henry Irving on the 30th anniversary of the performance of "The Bells."

THE PICCADILLY FOUNTAIN.

I.

Nothing is easier than to be critical of the acts of public bodies. They afford a continual theme for the overtaxed citizen and the cynic who sees the worst side of everything. Mindful of much good work which the County Council have accomplished, it is nevertheless permissible to condemn and regret their shortcomings in the direction of street architecture and decoration. Shaftesbury Avenue, and the degradation of Leicester Square and Piccadilly Circus, are painful exhibitions of their inefficiency and bad taste; they have lumped lavatories and "wash-ups" upon important thoroughfares with as little consideration as if they had been dealing with the slums of a mere manufacturing city. If during the next few years their public works do not redeem something of their past, they may go down to posterity as the survival of a strange vandalism in the most prosperous days of the great metropolis. Commendable as organisers of hygienic reforms, and not ill-intentioned in their sweeping away of worn-out thoroughfares and insanitary dwellings, they might have won for themselves undying renown if they had only taken into their councils men of education and culture, students of the arts, and citizens inspired by an Imperial pride in the capital of the Empire, whose government should be an example to our fellow-subjects beyond the seas and indeed to the world at large. The public authorities of the time left it to a private citizen to convert the dustheap of Leicester Square into a garden. Their successors have turned it into a public lavatory.

A still more noble site for an elevated art treatment they grudgingly relinquished to a committee of citizens for a memorial in honour of a great, good man. The subscribers entrusted the work to an artist of renown; but the County Council hampered him in his design, cut it short of its fair proportions, and then mocked it and ruined a noble open space with a public lavatory, empha-

Photo. Hollyer. *Ornamental base of the Shaftesbury Memorial Fountain in detail.*

By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

sised in its ugliness by what they conceived to be the realistic treatment of a ventilator surmounted with a cluster of street lamps. Almost as puzzling as the attitude of the County Council towards Piccadilly Circus and Leicester Square, and their failure to utilise an unusual opportunity for the creation of a fine thoroughfare in Shaftesbury Avenue, was the hostile criticism that some of the newspapers and their correspondents flung like mud-splashes at Mr. Gilbert's fountain, which, in spite of its absence of water, is still London's most conspicuous success in street decoration. The story of its conception and execution is so interesting an episode in the history of the plastic arts, and of Gilbert's art in particular, that I have induced him to relate it.

II.

"It is difficult," he said, "to tell the story dispassionately, but I will try;" and it will be admitted, I think, that he has done so with a modesty and an abnegation of self that under the circumstances fully atone for a certain resentment at the unnecessary difficulties which the County Council flung in his way.

"The whole work was the outcome of a very warm recommendation given to the committee by Boehm to employ me, and as they only had a limited sum at their disposal, and as my pecuniary ambitions were quite a secondary consideration in view of the opportunity of so interesting a work, I attempted more than I was able to realise. I started on my task not too well equipped for its achievement. Never having attempted a design of such magnitude, while I was at work upon it I was absolutely studying all the time that part of my art to which I sought to give expression. So the task was doubled from an artistic standpoint, and rendered almost impossible from a financial one.

"Then there were conditions as to site, and the proper provision for water, and a thousand and one technical questions which I had to master as I went along. The result was what I have always considered an incomplete expression of an enthusiastic intention. Artistically, however, it was more or less a success, financially a great *débâcle*. As the fountain now stands it in no way represents my original design; for the site, although I had it in mind as a hoped-for and possible one, was not actually granted until the work was ready for erection. When, at last, the site was selected, the present surrounding great buildings were not in existence, and the environment was constantly open to alterations. On the opening day, when the fountain was unveiled, there existed eight drinking-cups of more or less elaborate fashion, attached to the main body of the work, secured by a very carefully hand-wrought chain, specially designed and made for the purpose. The next morning I believe only two of the cups were left, but the frag-

ments of a third were found carefully broken and deposited in one of the basins, carrying clear evidence that the damage had taken some considerable time to effect, and was no doubt meant as a malicious criticism, if not a protest, against the work itself. I believe subsequently the Council recovered much of the missing material — a further proof that the damage was not done for the sake of theft. . . . Then followed a storm of abuse of the work itself, with no attempt at just criticism, but inspired by, and given utterance to, through the grossest form of ignorance. For instance, the figure surmounting the whole design was stated by some ingenious Solon as intended to convey a silly pun on the name Shaftesbury, because it had discharged its shaft from the bow. Then came another phase of criticism. Why should I have been employed in the making of so important a work to the exclusion of younger men, any one of whom could have taught me the ordinary elements of design? Oddly enough, at the time I was by several years the junior of the so-called band of youthful artists. . . . Time brought its little revenge, for I had what might have been the pleasure, had I felt malicious, of seeing my own work imitated, not to say travestied in detail, in many works that were subsequently given to the public.

"I refrain from going into any further details on these personal features of a somewhat painful subject, though I am grateful for the experience of its teaching, which proved far more beneficial than any I could ever have derived from the unqualified praise of the unattached critic. Moreover, I have the gratification at times of hearing from sources whence emanated my hardest knocks that the work has begun to gather estimation, and is beginning to be understood far more easily than my own handwriting. This is no time for recrimination, neither would it be becoming in me to take advantage of such a weapon as I now have in my hand to defend my much maligned child, since I could not do it at the moment when it most needed support. It is still growing, and when it comes to its maturity it will take care of itself and of me.

"It is futile to pretend that I started out to make that design with a view of illustrating any particular or symbolical meaning. Knowing that it was to be a fountain, I naturally selected a form which should be most appropriate to the purpose, and it only required a slight stretch of imagination to determine that fish and the offspring of the mermaid would be best adapted to my purpose. Then, having to do with an octagon shape, I did not wish to make the surface matter covering the eight different sides to appear as eight representations of the same scheme; in other words, I wished from every point of sight that the combinations of the eight faces, themselves alike one to the other, should present a varied design to the spectator. To do this necessitated much scheming, impossible now to describe, and resulted in the ornamental part of the fountain. The cistern-like structure immediately above the ornamental part I should have mentioned as the leading feature of my programme; it was practically laid down in my instructions that I must provide a means of storing water enough to help the supply to the lower parts from those above. The bronze base was an afterthought, for when the work was nearing completion I was made acquainted with the fact that provision should be made for the refreshment of the thirsty man and beast. I never originally intended this base to be in such confined relation or near proximity to the rest of the work. I had no alternative but to make it so, and the question of supplying the wandering cur with cool refreshment retarded me for weeks in the making of this portion. How to give the itinerant dog a good supply of fresh drinking water was a problem that I never was able to solve. Yet I believe that dogs occasionally, when they find a provision awaiting them, do lap from the basins which I made for them, and even return to the streets alive. As to the men and women who prefer the liquid from my fountain to that of the neighbouring palaces, I believe also that occasionally some innocuous refreshment is obtained when the fountain is allowed to perform its functions. Now these angle-pieces, where the drinking places for man and beast appear, I confess are the outcome not of the suggestion of a pun on the

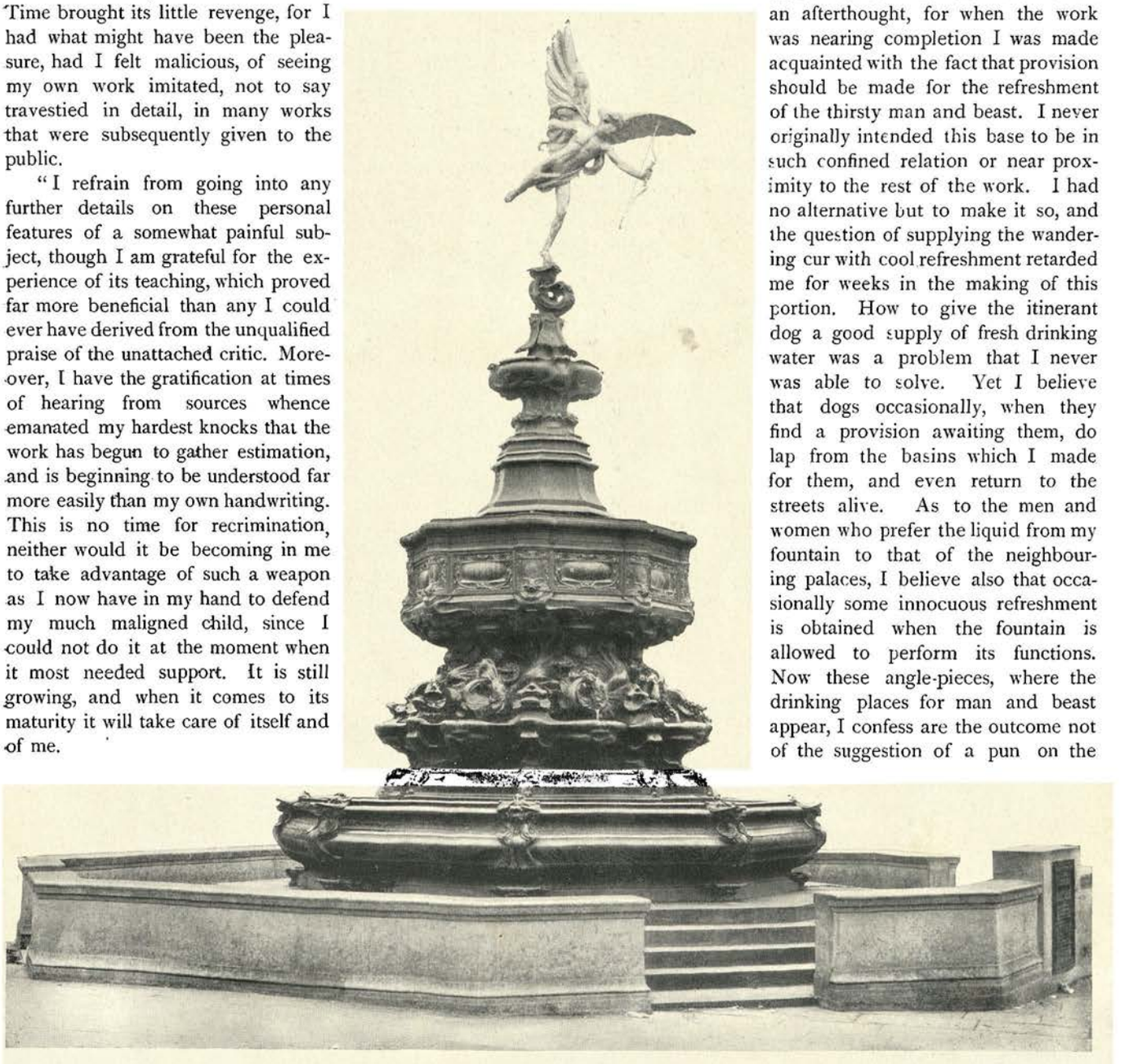


Photo. Hollyer.

The Shaftesbury Memorial Fountain at Piccadilly Circus (*p.* 13).

Unveiled by the Duke of Westminster, June 29, 1893. *By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.*

name Shaftesbury, but of the ancient form of rebus, whereby a builder, or a monarch, or any other important person chose to leave the impress of an individuality on his work without scrawling his name; and, to be frank, I have chosen the form which the chain composes to represent a sort of monogram of the word Shaftesbury, the little figure being merely an echo of the work above and the link between the two S's.

"As to the figure surmounting the whole, if I must confess to a meaning or a *raison d'être* for its being there, I confess to have been actuated in its design by a desire to symbolise the work of Lord Shaftesbury; the blindfolded Love sending forth indiscriminately, yet with purpose, his missile of kindness, always with the swiftness the bird has from its wings, never ceasing to breathe or reflect critically, but ever soaring onwards, regardless of its own peril and dangers.

"The original site upon which the fountain now stands was figured and determined by the not very wise rule that seems to hold good in all London streets—by the intersection of the thoroughfares; and this site was of the impossible shape of a distorted isochromal triangle, square to nothing of its surroundings—an impossible site, in short, upon which to place any outcome of the human brain, except possibly an underground lavatory! I had this horrible shape on my mind continually, and that is why I determined upon the plan and elevation of my work—an octagon which should by means of treatment really present the same adaptability to any site, just as a circular form would. Another difficulty, when I had practically finished, presented itself; I was beset with the threat that my fountain being a thing of utility as well as ornament, there could be no fitter site than its substructure for the then proposed underground lavatory. The alternative scheme—since carried out—was to be something which would teach Londoners what

Photo. Hollyer.

Figure of St. George.

By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

Epergne for Her Majesty Queen Victoria

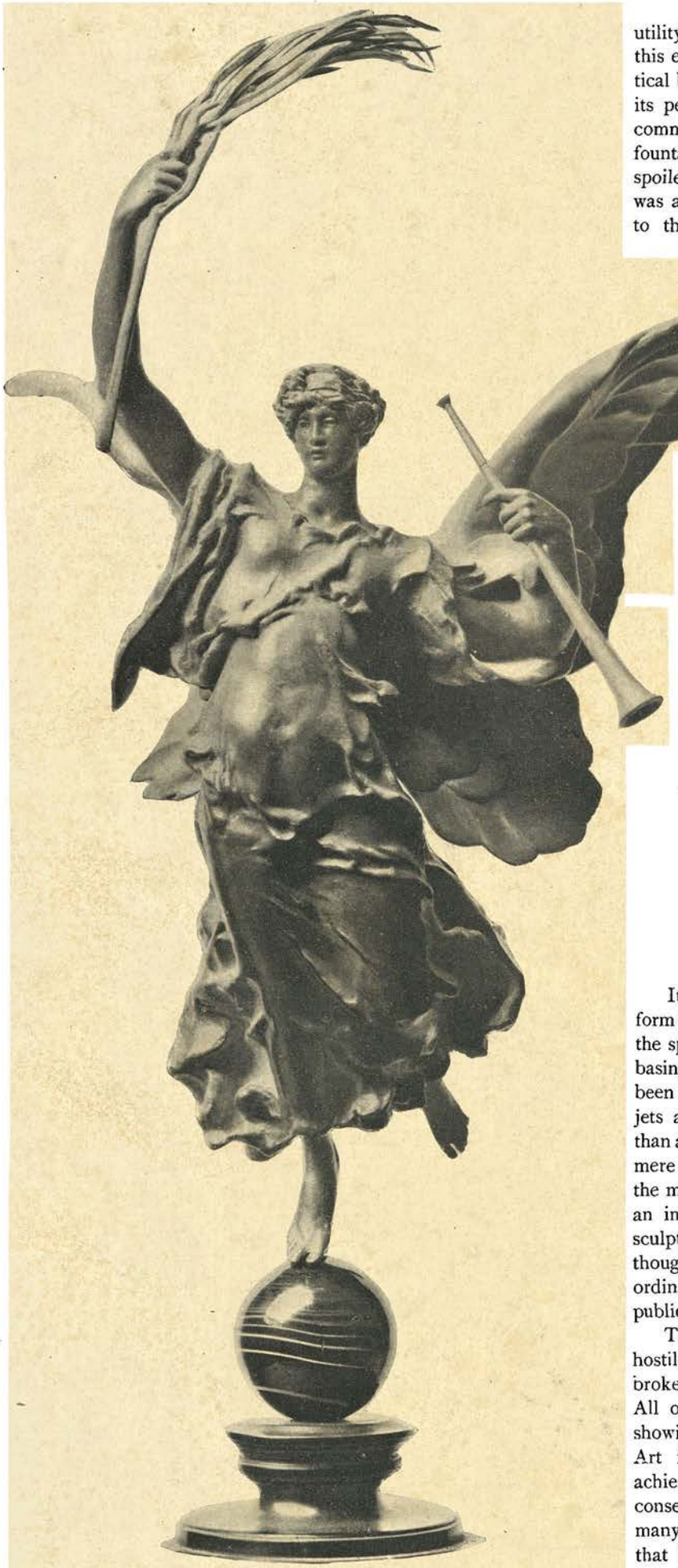


Photo. Hollyer.

'Victory.'

By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

utility and ornament should be; in point of fact, I believe this extremely ordinary yet utilitarian product of the practical brain of the County Council cost half as much again in its perpetration as my attempt at street decoration cost my committee. I draw the veil here over the cost of the fountain; everyone has to pay for the whims of his spoiled child. It should be understood that this work was a 'gift-horse' of the Shaftesbury Memorial Committee to the County Council, to whom the givers naturally could not, in the face of the generous accordance of so important a site for their gift, do other than acquiesce in the decision as to the treatment of the base and really most important part of the whole. I had provided for a great supply of water, thinking very little of the cost of it to the rate-payers, and it was my intention that my fountain from all its salient points should distribute jets of varied shapes and forms upwards, inwards, downwards and crossways, and indeed in every direction, and through the overflow create a perpetual cascade round the part now occupied by steps into a large basin, previously formed by the stone parapet, which was removed shortly after the unveiling, when it was found to be a somewhat costly experiment on the part of the Council. On this parapet I had placed at the urgent desire of the Committee a bust of Lord Shaftesbury, which was afterwards removed."

III.

It would not be difficult for the least imaginative person to form an opinion of the novel effect of Mr. Gilbert's work had the space occupied by the present steps been devoted to a basin, or pond, always filled with the water that would have been continually flowing into it from the various ornamental jets above, the whole structure being some six feet higher than at present. What must strike any dispassionate critic or mere spectator as so inconsistent with common sense, to use the mildest term, is that any public authority, having placed an important artistic work in the hands of a distinguished sculptor, should take upon themselves to tinker with it as though it were of no more importance than the work of an ordinary stonemason, or a parochial architect's design for a public lavatory.

The reticence with which Mr. Gilbert accepted the hostile and often very unjust criticism of his fountain is broken now for the first time, and not without some pressure. All other considerations apart, his story is interesting as showing the disabilities that embarrass the practice of Art in this country, in spite of which so many large achievements have been realised, and at the same time in consequence of which our great cities shame us with so many frock-coat-and-trouser statues. Mr. Gilbert confesses that his work at Piccadilly Circus has taught him many a valuable lesson. If only the County Council will lay to heart the moral of the story, London should be the gainer in her future street improvements.

BIRTH, PARENTAGE, AND EDUCATION.

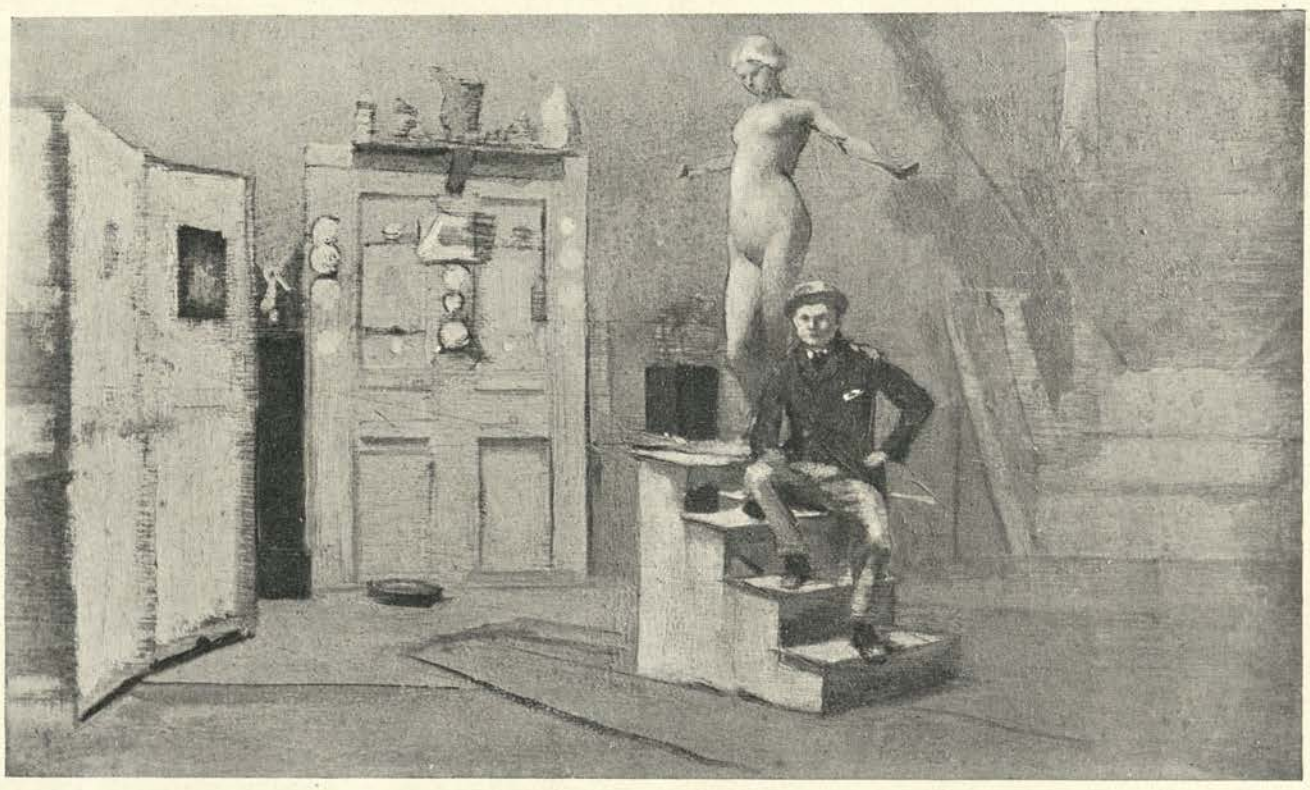
I.

Alfred Gilbert was born on August 12th, 1854, in Berners Street, Oxford Street, London. His parents were teachers of music. On one side of their abode lived Balfe, and on the other Vincent Wallace. No wonder that young Gilbert should himself be a musician of no mean capability. If, as he tells us, he has often been inspired by the theatre, he must also be much indebted to music. He knows the technique as well as the literature of the art which has been to him a great solace and recreation. His father, after whom he was named, died on February 6th, 1902, at the age of seventy-four. To quote an appreciative tribute from a musical critic, Mr. Alfred Gilbert, senior, "did good service to his art when it received less support from the general public than is happily the case at present." He was born on October 21st, 1828, at Salisbury, and at the early age of fourteen became a pupil of Dr. Charles Corfe. He entered the Royal Academy of Music in 1845. For theory he studied under Charles Lucas, the famous master, and for the piano under Robert Barnett; the principal of the Academy at the time being Cipriani Potter. In early life Mr. Gilbert established a choral and orchestral society, known as the Orion, almost coeval with Leslie's Choir. His next artistic enterprise was the Polyhymnia Choir, famous in its day. He was one of the first members of the Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts, and its honorary musical director to the day of his death, having held the position for upwards of forty years. The Musical Artists' Society, founded for the purpose of producing the works of English composers, inspired his sympathetic and energetic directorship. His activity, his cultivated taste, his musical scholarship and judgment were manifested as a director of the Philharmonic Society, as well as in its orchestral management, to which he succeeded on the retirement of Mr. Cummings. So far back as 1851, in conjunction with the Misses Cole, he organised a series of classical chamber concerts, which live to-day among the pleasant reminiscences of many ardent lovers of good music. Mr. Gilbert married Charlotte Cole (the elder of the two sisters, both popular vocalists), who survives him. Organist at several churches of note, Mr. Gilbert was also the author of many operettas, cantatas, choruses, songs, and orchestral compositions. His devotion to his art is well exemplified in the fact that he found his chief recreation in editing and fingering, for the use of pupils, works of the old masters.

The sculptor's mother is a remarkable woman. Though age has subdued her vocal powers, she is still an enthusiastic musician, and her reminiscences of notable people of her time are peculiarly interesting. In the village of Tarrington, Herefordshire, where she was born, her father was the organist. A man of varied abilities, he built the organ upon which he played. Mrs. Gilbert remembers Shirley Brooks (afterwards editor of *Punch*), James Davidson (the accomplished critic of the *Times* and husband of Arabella Goddard), Jarrett the impresario, and Desmond Ryan (critic of the *Standard*), paying her father a visit, and that she and her sister sang to them, being accompanied

Sketches for various objects.

By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.



Alfred Gilbert, R.A., in his Studio in Rome.
From a painting by J. M. Swan, A.R.A.

Alfred Gilbert, R.A., working in the London Studio of Mr. Seymour Lucas.
From a painting by J. Seymour Lucas, R.A.

on the piano by Davidson. Her father had taught them singing to the violin in the old-fashioned way. The gentlemen from London were so impressed with the singing of Mr. Cole's two daughters that by their advice they presently went to the metropolis and took up music as a profession. As the Misses Cole they made their first appearance at Exeter Hall in the same year, and were engaged for the Hereford Festival. They were the first to sing, in public, Mendelssohn's part-song "O Would that My Love." For many years they were popular vocalists at classical concerts and in oratorio. Mrs. Gilbert's mother was the cousin of John Parry, the accomplished pioneer of the class of platform entertainment in which Mr. Corney Grain and Mr. George Grossmith afterwards excelled. Mrs. Gilbert's sister, Susannah, was the understudy on tour for Jenny Lind, and sang for her on several occasions. So that Gilbert's childhood may thus be said to have been cradled in song. He remembers with pride being taken to concerts to hear his mother sing; and one of his delights, even now, is to sit down at the piano with her and recall some of those happy days.

Photo. Hollyer; from the model in plaster.

Detail of the Howard Memorial, Bedford.

By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

II.

I asked him where he obtained his early education.

"My first school," he said, "was the Mercers'. My fellow-Academician Leslie had been brought up there. On leaving the Mercers' I was sent to the Aldenham Grammar School, in Hertfordshire. My own boys have been educated there. It is a kind of traditional school with us."

"And when did you begin to feel an impulse towards the study and practice of Art?"

"I suppose my very earliest inclinations must have been in that direction. To get off fagging at Aldenham I used to go down to an adjacent chalk-pit and amuse myself. I collected walking-sticks, and carved heads upon them, and by judicious presents of the same obtained immunity from some of my lessons. I took a little room for a studio in the village, for which I paid a shilling a week. My first model was a schoolfellow, my junior, Stanley O. Buckmaster, now K.C. Another of my school-mates at the same time was William Barnard, who, as a barrister, has now an extensive practice in the Divorce Court. Sir James Wilkes, the President of the Royal College of Physicians, had been educated at the same school. At that little studio I went on neglecting my school tasks; and in order to cover my disgrace, being thought a failure for a University career, I elected to go in for the ordinary examinations for the College of Surgeons. I was thereupon allowed to leave school and go to London, which was no doubt my leading idea in selecting to go in for medicine. Instead of entering myself at the hospital, however, I spent nearly all my time at the British Museum and other places, where I met some of the most famous artists of the present day—met them, so to speak, in the nursery. Then I entered Heatherley's School of Art—the historical Heatherley's, where Thackeray and others of his time had studied—and from Heatherley's I procured entrance to the schools of the Royal Academy. In those days the Academy school of modelling was only a make-believe; and, feeling that it was necessary to learn the business I had resolved to follow, I applied for a place at the then Mr. Boehm's, as an improver. I stayed with him a year, during which time I competed for the gold medal of the Royal Academy, and learnt the best lesson of my life—how to take a beating from a better man than myself; and that man was Thornycroft."

Much as I hope that the reader will take pleasure in Gilbert's revelation of himself, I can honestly say that it is to me a delightful task to be his interpreter. Now and then with a smile, now and then with a sigh, he seems to be telling me the story of some other person, a friend whom he had

known years ago, a companion in whom he had taken a deep interest.

"'And then?' you ask," he presently remarked. "Well, during the latter days of the time I am speaking of an intervening incident had been ripening; not of a more poetic nature than, perhaps, my aspirations in Art, but still one which carried more material facts in its influence on my eventual career. A fervent passion for something more lovable than my beautiful art had taken possession of me, and, choosing between the two mistresses, I preferred the more conventional and material of them; at which time I was glad to follow my master's advice, and my father's acquiescence in it, and go to study in Paris. It was, I must confess, not my immediate desire to study in Paris, but the natural desire of all young men to secure a wife; and at twenty-one I married my cousin Alice. A few months afterwards I wrote home announcing the fact and enclosing my marriage lines. . . . Then followed for both of us — borne with patience and courage, I think—a long and terrible punishment of what, at the time, was considered an indiscretion. We had to live. I had to study and work as well. Besides working at art, I followed up my medical studies, and in the intervals taught boys the elements of Latin and Greek, dabbled in various trades, and, with assistance from my parents, managed to exist. Three years thus passed away in Paris. I remained all the time in an unsettled state of mind as to whether I should follow art or surgery. It was the incident of 'The Kiss of Victory,' which I have previously explained to you, that decided me; and I had become the father of two children. I went to Rome, as I said; and, having been working there for seven years, I returned to London, with the specific idea of designing and making the quadriga with which it was proposed to substitute the statue of the Iron Duke by Hyde Park Corner. This fell through. Things went on without any particular incident, except such as we have already discussed, until Boehm's death. I occupied myself in doing all I could to deserve well of his recommendation. I never knew an artist so utterly devoid of personal jealousy as Boehm. He was one of the kindest, most gentle and generous of men; at the same time sensible of what was due to his Art, socially and generally. He was on pleasantly familiar terms with his illustrious sitters, more especially with Ruskin and Carlyle. It was the habit of certain critics to disparage his work; but I don't see any equestrian statues to-day that are better than his."

Photo. Wellsley.

Memorial to John Howard, at Bedford.
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.
Unveiled by the Duke of Bedford, March 28, 1894.

"About the time of Boehm's death you were living at Gomshall?"

"Yes; but prior to that in a bungalow, at Birchington, which for a short time had been occupied by Rossetti, who, as you know, is buried there. But The Gravel Pits, at Gomshall, was our haven—the haven of my wife and family — and our heaven in England. Holl had lived there, and I had many pleasant walks and talks with him while he was building the house, which is now occupied by Leader. After Holl left the house Boehm took it; and I took it from Boehm. One of my neighbours happened to be my first client, Mr. Somerset Beaumont, who commissioned 'The Kiss of Victory.' The Gravel Pits was an old Henry the Eighth house, a delightful place. I did some of my best work there, in quiet and peace. Environment is a great thing to an artist. The Surrey lanes and woods are always beautiful. One of the most notable figures in the village of Gomshall was the celebrated Dr. Capern, a great authority on butterflies. Through his remarkable collection, I think, I owed the development of my love for natural forms and the development of my desire to make use of them. The wonderful things that Dr. Capern showed me fully endorsed my views of their importance in my work. In my subsequent efforts in the way of design I more than ever made use of natural forms, not alone, of course, in the way of butterflies, beetles and moths, but in

the treasures of the sea, fishes of all kinds and every class of molluscous and crustacean life—the crab, the lobster, and such like. To these beautiful models I am indebted for many of my best incidents of artistic design and construction."

Photo. Hollyer; from the working model.

Ewer and Rosewater Dish. Presented to H.R.H. the Duke of York (the Prince of Wales) by the Officers of the Brigade of Guards.

By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

PROFESSOR AND LECTURER.

I.

Gilbert's appointment to the Professorship of Sculpture and Lecturer at the Royal Academy came to him as a welcome distinction at an unpropitious period of his career. He had been harassed with the completion of works upon which he had incurred heavy losses. Financially, in other ways, the world looked very dark to him. But the world had to deal with a man of courage as well as talent. Few could have stood up against the calamities he had endured. He had neither the leisure nor the inclination to make, as he afterwards described it, "a literary monument" of his professorship. While he regarded the duties of the office with pleasure, the thought of his great predecessors, Flaxman, Weekes, and others, made him anxious, but at the same time strengthened his resolution to follow out his idea of a new departure. The spur of circumstances over which he had no control made the situation one that, even had he wished otherwise, prohibited the preparation of his lectures in the customary form of written studies for ultimate publication, which he had resolved to shun, making his addresses familiar talks with the students, that belong rather to the class-room than the platform. As he was leaving his house in Maida Vale to give his first lecture he opened the door to a bailiff, who had come to take possession of the ideal home and studio which he had built and furnished, and occupied with so much hope and pride.

"Turning my back," he said to me afterwards, "upon that melancholy situation, like an actor in a play changing to what is called the comedy relief of tragedy, I found at the Academy a large and cordial audience of students and friends awaiting me. I was deeply touched by their reception. They little dreamt with what varied emotions I addressed them. I had trusted in Providence, not only for my ability to speak, but also for the matter of my lecture. The change of scene, from the lowered lights and tragic mask, as it were, of the bailiff and his mission, to the comedy of the lecture room, the dark curtain and the light, haunted me for a moment; but, encouraged by the unfettered and sympathetic aspect of the new situation, I played my part with an apparent indifference to all outside influences, and frequently elicited the kindly applause of the audience. My success was sufficient to warrant me in pursuing the same course of extemporaneous lecturing in the future, and, I believe, with advantage to my hearers. Under these conditions a professor is moved by the occasion. He would not dare to sit down to his desk and write things in cold blood that he would say and illustrate on his blackboard under the impulse of the time and the responsive influence of his audience."

A student who was present at the first of the third series of lectures told me that, towards the close, Gilbert made a pause that cast a gloom over his audience which was hard to dispel, though it terminated in a ripple of sympathetic applause. It was when the lecturer referred to the death

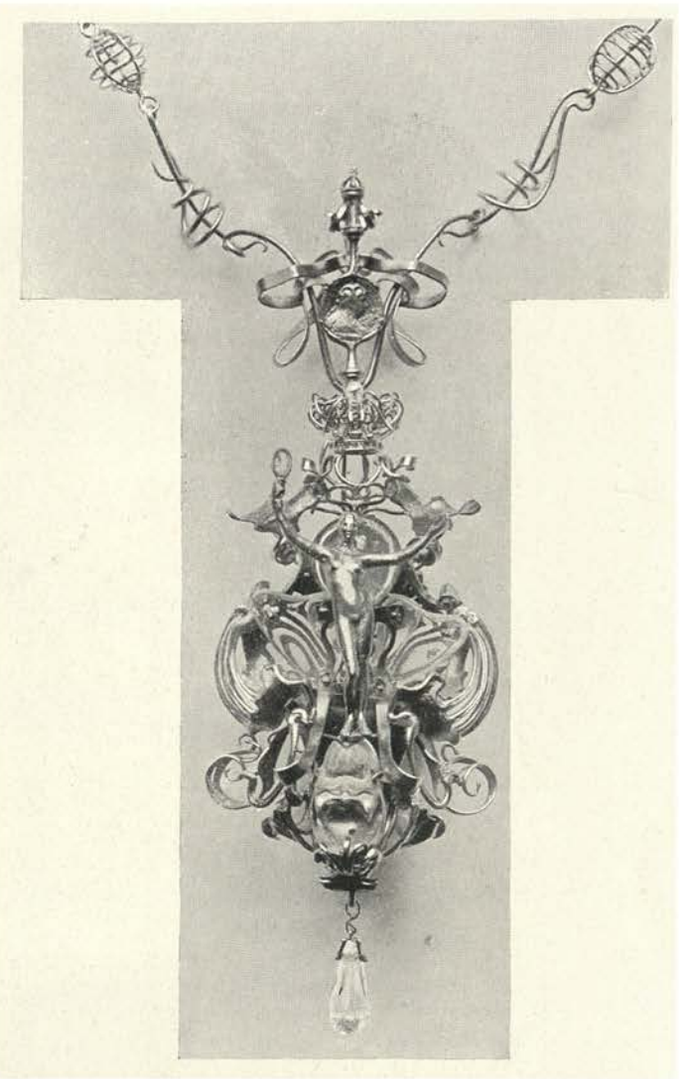
of his friend and brother artist, Onslow Ford, and failed to do so without altogether controlling his emotion. "It was a pathetic incident," said my friend, "and one to be remembered in the remarkable address of the new Professor."

"Counting, as I could," said Gilbert, resuming our talk, "on an audience by no means ignorant, and often very acute in regard to the literature of art, I felt that I could treat my subjects on broad principles, not dealing with sculpture preferentially. I don't believe in a sculptor or painter as a mere specialist. I feel that the student should be trained on the most catholic principles theoretically; yet mechanically on the most rigid principles. Since I gave my first lectures as Professor of Sculpture at the Academy, I have been called upon to lecture elsewhere; so much elsewhere, indeed, that it has almost become a tax; but I felt that the work, while very pleasant, was also educating me in the very way I designed to educate my students—by practice and experience, which beget confidence."

Photo. Hollyer.

An Offering to Hymen.
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

By permission of J. P. Heseltine, Esq.



Badge of Office for the President of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours.

By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

Reproduced by permission of the Council.

II.

Talking on another day about extraneous influences on the craft of the sculptor or the painter, Gilbert said, "No artist can properly study Art without studying the thoughts and expressions enshrined in Literature, especially those who use Literature as their means of expression. It has often been said, and pretty well proved, that great poets have not always been capable of writing verses suitable for musical setting; but it can never be said that a great poet or prose writer is incapable of conveying suggestions to an appreciative and sensitive mind, which may not be useful in another form of expression. It is not always the versifier and poet who gives the best suggestion for modern treatment in a broad way. Writers of fiction and romance must often be inspired with a spontaneous suggestion which, coming to a versifier, he would have to consider, construct and trim, before he could bring it to perfection. In this way the spontaneity might be lost. You remember what Byron said of Scott, that 'his prose was poetry and his poetry prose.'"

Post Equitem sedet atra Cura.

By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

I interrupted him, to ask what he considered to be the essential elements of a great work of art.

"It is not," he said, "merely the exposition of an individual's idea and perception of Nature, but is a great work, in proportion to the way it appeals generally, severally, and to different intellects, through the original medium of its creator. . . . Art is not Nature; and Nature can never be Art, because Art is merely a conventional means of transcribing and translating the effect and spirit of Nature upon its observer into conventional form, and which is surely the only means of transmitting its impression."

I have, upon my desk while I write, a collection of brief summaries from the *Times* and other journals of Mr. Gilbert's lectures. They betoken a singularly happy variety of subject. I shall only refer to one of them, and that for an interesting reason. I knew that Gilbert was to deliver a lecture at Cambridge. I asked him a day or two before if he had formulated his ideas for the occasion. "No," he said, "I shall think it over as I go down in the train." Meanwhile, I commissioned a reporter to give me a short note of the lecture, in three or four hundred words. As Gilbert travelled down to Cambridge he saw, at one of the railway stations, the announcement of a performance of his namesake's charming play of "Pygmalion and Galatea." That wayside poster gave him his cue for the treatment of his subject; and my "chiel amang them takin' notes" reported him as follows:—

"Mr. Alfred Gilbert, R.A., lectured on Sculpture in connection with the University Extension at Cambridge yesterday. He spoke extemporaneously to an influential and deeply interested audience for over an hour, fancifully illustrating many of his points with dainty references to the classic story of Pygmalion and Galatea. He remarked that the art of sculpture was threefold in its purpose: mechanical, real, and ideal, and through idealism became the highest expression of artistic form. The work of the sculptor was not merely the work of one who hews and breaks, and tries to make a figure. There is, or should be, behind his efforts something of love, veneration, and faith. Pygmalion loved the image his brains had created, and he longed for something more—namely, that his great creation should speak. The supreme object of the sculptor was that his creation should speak without the aid of an exhibition catalogue. The work of the artist should be the work, not only of his art, but also of his heart. The more he thought of it the more he was astonished that the practice, teaching and

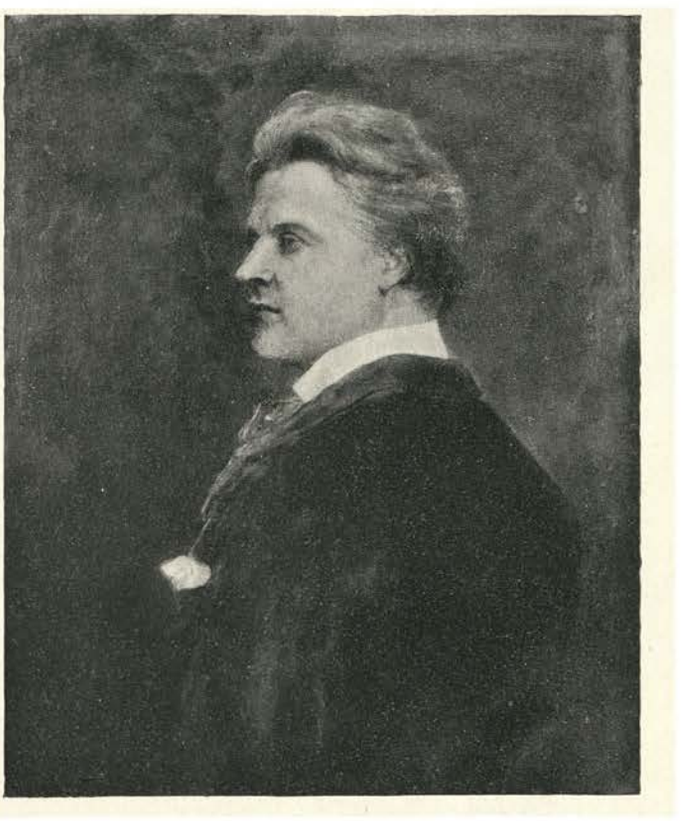
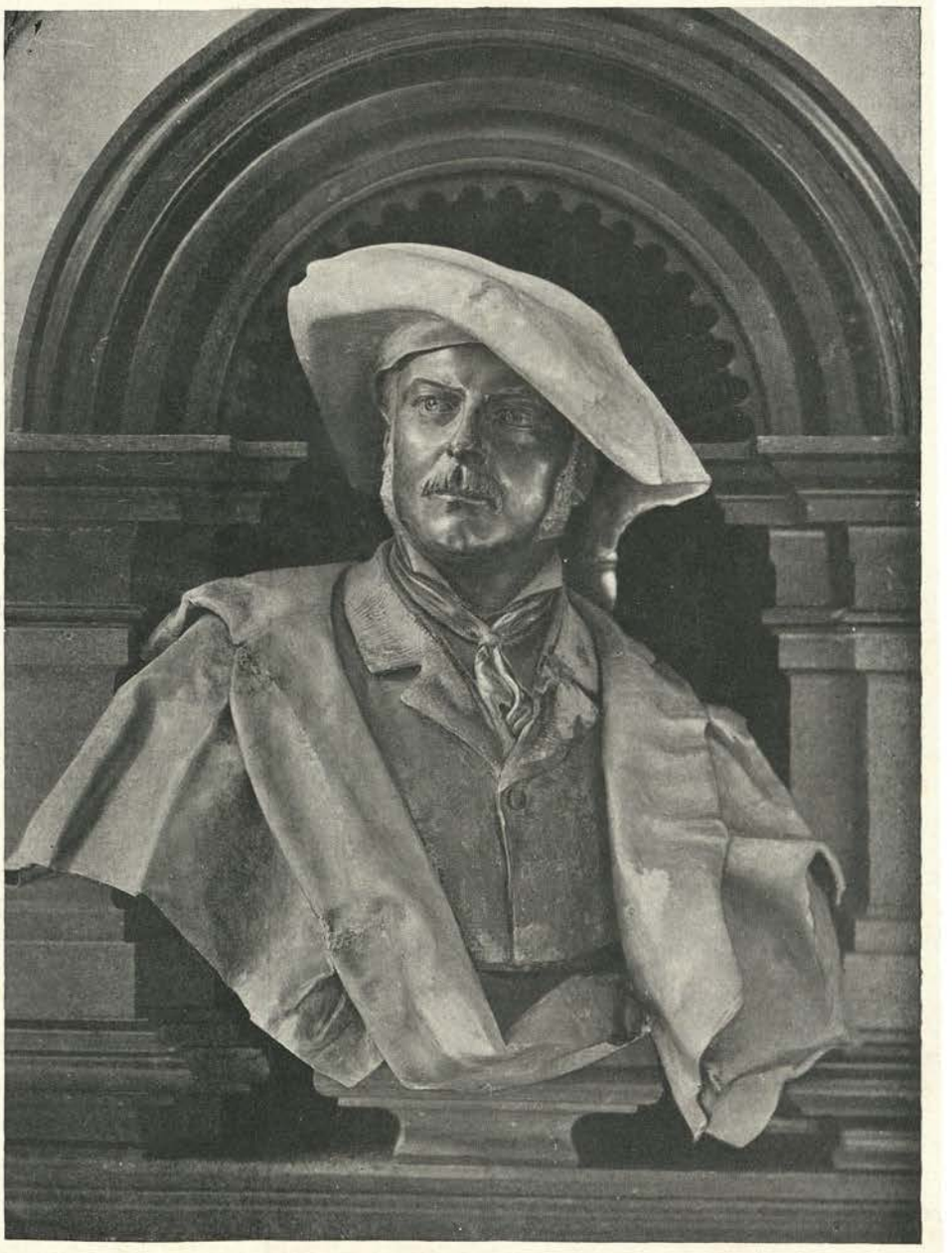


Photo. Hollyer.

Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

From a painting by G. F. Watts, R.A.

encouragement of Art was so little thought of. He was surprised that the Fine Arts were not included in the curriculum of a University career. Form in sculpture was absolutely identical with form in literature, poetry and music. The sculptor should be as well equipped as the great mathematician, the great poet, or the great architect. The speaker urged the importance of connecting the practice of sculpture with the practice of general education, for until we had that he was convinced we could never hope to take that rank as artists which great men amongst the Greeks took in a comparatively short time. That was the outcome not merely of pure mechanical training and skill but also the influence of great mental culture. When we looked at their works we had to acknowledge our impotence in the creative faculty. The artist must read and be a thinker, and the more he thinks the better artist he is likely to be. In conclusion the lecturer eloquently emphasised his view on the kinship of sculpture with literature and music, and concluded an impressive and brilliant address amidst loud and long continued applause."



FRANCIS MONTAGU HOLL, R.A.
Born MDCCCXXXXV. Died MDCCCLXXXVIII.

How short the life,
How great the work.

Memorial to F. Holl, R.A., in the Crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral.
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

[We are specially indebted to Mr. William Vivian for allowing access to his collection, and for permitting the reproduction of the working models for the statuettes on the Clarence Tomb, and for other illustrations of Mr. Gilbert's work.—EDITOR.]

THE STORY OF THE CLARENCE MEMORIAL.

I.

Often as I had seen Gilbert engaged on the great work which now enshrines the mortal remains of the King's lamented son and heir to the throne, who was called to his rest in the early days of his manhood, the sculptor was always studiously reticent as to the Royal commands concerning it or the origin and intention of his general design. He appeared to feel that it was not wise to discuss it in its earlier stages, seeing that he was continually revising the details of his model. While the broad, masterly form and artistic scope of the work remain the same, its decoration is being from time to time elaborated with a loving and patient care. Though in a measure complete in the impressiveness of its general effect, it is understood to be the wish of His Majesty the King that no pictorial representation of the tomb shall be published until every detail is finished to Mr. Gilbert's entire satisfaction. The elaborate character of the decorative details which are still in progress will be fully appreciated by my examples of several models and studies, which have not, however, in every case been followed in their final treatment and execution. The artist has related the story of the memorial tomb from his point of view, which, I venture to think, will, to the reader of this brief sketch, be the most interesting from all points of view.

"Immediately after I heard of the death of the Duke of Clarence in 1892 I received a telegram requesting me to go to Sandringham. I arrived there quite uncertain as to the nature of my mission. I had never been in the Royal presence before . . . Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales had sent for me to design and execute a memorial to their lamented son. I had been selected because I was the pupil of the late Sir Edgar Boehm, who had been Sculptor in Ordinary to Her Majesty the late Queen Victoria; a title which had been revived after long abeyance, as a special honour to him. It appeared that during his lifetime, unknown entirely to myself, out of the kindness of his heart he had spoken very highly to their present Majesties of his pupil. That was doubtless the reason of my being sent for. I was at Sandringham from Saturday until Monday. During the night of Sunday, until just in time to catch my train on Monday morning, I conceived and designed the *ensemble* of the entire monument as it now stands; and it has never been altered. Within three days I submitted to their Royal Highnesses a sketch embodying my conception. It was approved, the working out of the details being, of course, left to me entirely.

"The reason for the form I have chosen is this: understanding that the monument was to go into the Memorial Chapel, formerly known as the Wolsey Chapel, naturally my first desire was to visit the spot and study the aspect under which the completed work would have to be seen, the conditions it would have to fulfil. The only available site in the chapel was the exact centre, as there already existed two monuments, one being a cenotaph to the memory of the late Prince Consort, and the other a memorial tomb to the late Duke of Albany. I found, to my great satisfaction, that the recollection I had of the chapel, which I had seen years before, had not played me false, and that the character of the design I had made was a fair basis to work upon, in harmony with its environment. The chapel is Gothic, and its history is well known in connection with the times of Edward III. and William of Wykeham. The interior is for the most part a restoration, and the mural decorations, which are of the most costly character, inlaid with precious stones and marbles, are not at all Gothic either in feeling or intention—stained glass windows being the only part of the modern restoration which is at all in harmony or respect with the original edifice. Here presented itself, to my mind, a great difficulty: that of placing a modern work which should be in harmony with the ancient work, and yet not be a mere reproduction of its parts, but rather the outcome of its suggestion, and, so to speak, be what I took ancient Gothic to be to those who practised it, the best expression of a living artist. I thus determined to treat all my detail, and in fact the whole work, in such a way that its general appearance should be that of Gothic, yet it should be absolutely devoid of the slightest evidence of imitation.

"This decision enabled me to indulge in greater freedom as to the design of the ornamental treatment of those parts where costume had to

Bronze Pedestal, surmounted by the figure of St. Elizabeth of Hungary (see p. 30).

By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

be dealt with, and also as to the form of the sarcophagus which was to contain the remains of the Duke of Clarence. With this explanation it will be readily understood why the whole monument takes the form of an altar-tomb—a form of shrine, in fact, the sarcophagus being a sort of sacred receptacle, protected by an open-worked grille or screen, as is often seen in ancient works, especially Gothic. At the time I had no idea that upon that very spot there had existed, down to the days of the Civil Wars and after, the remnants of the great monument which Torrigiano had made for Cardinal Wolsey at his own command. On the completion of his famous monument to Henry VII. in Westminster Abbey the great artist was called upon to execute this work in the Cardinal's own lifetime, and while in the plenitude of his greatness. The work was for a considerable time in hand, and Wolsey fell into disgrace and died before it was finished. On learning this piece of history I made inquiries, and found records of what the work would probably have been when finished, and to my utter astonishment and amazement, not to say great pleasure, I found that I had hit upon the treatment which the great Torrigiano in his time had judged most fitting. I confess that the work of the great master, as shown in his offering to the memory of Henry VII., inspired me with views which led to my making my own design; its relation to the Abbey is entirely that which I conceived my own work should bear to the Memorial Chapel. I had long before seen and studied the Abbey memorial, and noted that there was a work, with Gothic surroundings, which was entirely in harmony, though the work of a then living man, and a most illustrious child of the Renaissance.

"I decided to treat my offering as a shrine, as a Gothic sculptor would have done; rather than a mere portrait effigy. In the conception of the pierced-work grille I had in my mind the traditional tree of Jesse—a kind of heraldic allusion to the ancestry and the patron saints of the Prince and his house. Thus there came to grow into expressed form representations of the patron saints of the various countries with whose rulers our own Royal house is allied; and thus the representation of certain saints who are acknowledged patrons of the late Duke's pursuits, and his being in life—viz., St. Nicholas, for Russia, the patron saint of boys and sailors; St. Edward the Confessor, name-saint of the builder of the chapel; and of Edward III., who built it; St. Barbara, patroness of armourers and fortifications—soldiers in fact; St. Etheldreda, or Audrey, the Old English saint for Cambridge and the Eastern Counties. St. George and the Virgin were suggested to my mind for a twofold reason. It appears, in the history of the chapel, that when Edward III. called upon William of Wykeham to aid him in its building, he desired that this part of the building should be dedicated to St. George, the King just having founded the Order of the Garter; and there is some sort of supposition that this adjunct to, or restoration of, an existing edifice was meant as a lady-chapel. William of Wykeham, not a little sore at the King's desire to be considered the master builder, took umbrage, and refused further work unless his own share should be recognised; and he is supposed to have furthermore stipulated that the chapel should be dedicated to St. George, with the Virgin as a tutelary saint. This hearsay legend was sufficient suggestion to my mind for the introduction of representations of the two saints. The other reason was that I considered that a national monument to the eldest son in the direct line would not be complete when other saints were represented without the introduction of the patron saint of his country. I prefer to withhold all excuse for the introduction of a representation of the Blessed Virgin, in regard to which symbol, however, I had no other intention than the desire to portray

St. Edward the Confessor.
Working Model for the Statuette on the Clarence Tomb, Windsor.
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

St. Michael.
Working Model for the Statuette on the Clarence Tomb, Windsor.
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

the suggestion of a maternal devotion which to my mind could not be otherwise illustrated.

"Now we come to the sarcophagus. The recumbent figure was necessarily a representation of the dead Prince, and as such had to be a realistic one in order that in future times his lineaments and clothing should be truthful history. This was a great difficulty, and necessitated the representation being placed at such a height from the eye that its very modern details should not present a jarring note in the whole conception. The adjuncts to this recumbent figure, which are more plainly visible, were necessarily treated in a conventional manner. Another reason for the much condemned altitude of the position of the recumbent statue grew out of an expressed desire that the remains of the dead Prince should rest as it were in mid-air. The kneeling angel at his head, supporting the elaborately wrought crown as a sort of canopy over the figure, is symbolical of the promise of eternal life, the crown being a representation of the twelve-gated city, alluded to in the book of Revelation. At the feet is the representative of Love — an Anteros rather than an Eros — the sad Love holding in its hands a broken wreath, its head bowed and draped, and its wings enveloping the feet of the dead Prince. This symbol, I think, is sufficiently apparent, in view of the circumstances which surrounded the death of the youthful Prince on the eve of his entering the state of perfect manhood."

I pause here to remark that I know of no finer example of the sincerity of Gilbert's art than is to be found in the accessory figures on this magnificent altar-tomb of the Duke of Clarence. They exemplify, it seems to me, the highest expression of idealism with a perfect sense of realism, a combination that brings Nature and Art harmoniously together. The technique, though perfect in every detail, makes no special claim upon the spectator's attention. One may see that the details have been the work of years; it is the *ensemble*, the perfect whole that impresses—the simplicity that is so often achieved in all the arts by persistent and untiring labour. The poet wins his flowing verse and his harmonious metre after much revision and rearrangement of words. Mr. Gilbert's poems, in bronze and marble, have been similarly realised. I saw those two figures of the Virgin and St. George, so long in hand, progressing with such minute additions of details, made up of studies from crustaceous occupants of the sea, together with shell forms and other objects of natural history, that I grew to understand why the sculptor did not always turn out his work with what the tradesman calls "punctuality and dispatch." Gilbert employed no staff of assistants. His studio was not busy with helpful students and apprentices; and no one acquainted with his methods and his work could fail to deplore in his case the pathetic truth of Longfellow's familiar reflection that "Art is long and life is fleeting." Having made a mental note of this pause in our conversation and lighted a cigar, while my friend paced the room, I drew his attention to the thoughts I had in my

St. George.
Working Model for the Statuette on the Clarence Tomb, Windsor.
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

mind, more particularly having regard to the figures in question.

"St. George," he said, "occupied two years of steady work. The armour is absolutely an invention. Every detail of it is so made and so contrived as to be a working model of a suit of armour that could be worn. The shapes of its parts and the ornamentations upon them are merely a *résumé* of the entire monument; every line being one which can be found in the smallest detail existing in the rest of the work, which has the appearance of Gothic; and yet I maintain there is not the slightest resemblance to anything we know of Gothic work, unless the use of shells and other natural forms may be said to have influenced me as they doubtless did the Gothic craftsman of mediæval times. The sword, even, which represents a double-handled one, is a pure invention, and is rather meant as the symbol of such a weapon than an archæological fact. The pedestal upon which the figure stands is a free use of the conventional form denoting a reptile, arranged geometrically, so as to form a base for the figure suggestive of the Dragon and All Evil, which the saint has overcome.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary.
Working Model for the Statuette on the Clarence Tomb, Windsor.
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

"The question of treating the costume regardless of archæological accuracy arose from the consideration that all the figures represented should appear of one family, of any time; setting forth, as they are meant to do, symbols rather than actual representations; and as indicating also that they form a large family of symbolical relations, and therefore of one period more or less. From the artistic point of view, also, this treatment lessened my difficulty with regard to the general character and effect of the whole monument. Had the figures been dressed in the various and characteristic costumes of their respective times, they would have presented an incongruous contrast to the general design. Similarly to the way in which St. George has been treated, so has the costume of each individual saint been composed of a reproduction of component parts of the whole work—the figure harmonious with the tomb generally, and the tomb with the building.

"Many inquiries have been made as to the introduction, and also the meaning intended by the treatment, of the figure of the Virgin. As to that I can only say it is the outcome of reflection upon the nature and character of the divine personage (see frontispiece). I have represented her as standing in the midst of a wild rose bush. Circling her feet, it forms a natural Crown of Thorns, which, sprouting, send their shoots upwards and around the figure, in their turn giving off roses to within reach of her clasped hands, where a white lily rises to her touch. Thence the fronds ascend and twine around her head and form a natural crown of full-blown roses. The Virgin is simply draped, with a head-covering over-

shadowing her half-sad expression of features; and she is meant to be in an attitude of resignation rather than that of prayer. The same base which supports the St. George carries this figure, as it does all the others."

The statuettes, as component parts of the rest of the monument, are not only remarkable for their design and beauty of detail and ornamentation, but for the lustrous glory of the colours that distinguish their costumes. The shifting light of the sun, or the flickering of memorial candles upon them, refreshes the eye with the iridescence of pearls and precious stones and crystals, and what appears to be a gorgeous pigment, all toned in accordance with their relative values and in artistic combination—effects, by-the-bye, which may be found in Mr. Gilbert's altar-screen at St. Alban's, and in many of his smaller works in metals. I now asked him if he would give me some information about these arrangements of colour, in which the art of the painter had been annexed by the sculptor.

"The colouring of these figures," he said, "is not paint, neither is it enamel. It is produced by a medium which, by many experiments, I thought would serve me well, as it has abundantly proved. As it is composed of oxides and certain liquids of natural but imperishable lacquers, I have every confidence that it will last for ever. Some of the colours are vitreous, though not in the sense that they have been treated with heat. The sarcophagus itself is made of Mexican onyx, and actually is, in its construction, rather a piece of engineering work than that of masonry; and this part of the structure, although invisible, is, perhaps, the most elaborate and most deeply thought out portion of the whole work; for all sorts of questions, such as weight-bearing, compensation for changes of atmosphere, thrust and stability, to say nothing of the necessity for providing a safe bearing for the enormous weight of the whole monument over the thinly groined vaulting of the floor of the chapel, had to be considered."

G. F. Watts, R.A.
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

II.

I have referred to Gilbert's fancy and idealism. It had often appealed to me as a phenomenal gift. Asked, now and then, some question concerning a piece of work in hand, I always found that it was to him an allegory or a symbol, and sometimes more—the illustration of a legend or romance, or the story of a miracle. One of the figures on the tomb is Saint Elizabeth of Hungary (p. 30). On the eve of completion, it struck me as singularly novel, and my inquiries concerning it evolved one of many instances of the sculptor's intensity of purpose, and was to me, as something of a novelist, not only a remarkable appreciation of the beautiful subtleties of legendary romance, but of the capacity to give it life in words as well as in imperishable metals. I brought him back in this conversation to that ideal figure of the Hungarian saint.

"The reason for the introduction of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary," he said, "was, that when the names of the proposed saints were submitted to Queen Victoria, she expressed a desire that Saint Elizabeth, who was the progenitrex of the late Prince Consort, should be represented. This suggestion of Her Majesty's was a particularly happy one. It gave me scope to carry out my train of thought with regard to the Virgin and the other female saints, to represent Saint Elizabeth as the all-charitable and therefore loving embodiment of the best human nature. According to the legend, you know, she was the wife of the Landgrave of Thuringen. She was given to profusion in almsgiving to the poor, despite the sordid proclivities of the Landgrave himself; to such an extent that he refused to find her any more means for the exercise of her charities. In order that she might continue her desires, she sacrificed her jewels and other portable possessions. One day, when she thought the Landgrave had gone hunting, Elizabeth, filling the skirts of her gown with bread and fruits and other things, went forth on a mission of mercy. She was met unexpectedly by her spouse, who, seeing her so heavily laden, inquired what she carried. 'Only roses,' she replied; and, extending her arms, there fell from her garments in rich abundance a mass of roses, red and white; and this miracle converted the Landgrave to the faith of Saint Elizabeth.

"I have chosen to represent this saint richly clad and crowned, as becoming her rank, and in contrast to the errand which earned her glorification, that she might present a distinct embodiment of character to that symbolised by the representation of the Virgin, who, though of lowly estate, was the greater. Her self-denial and the Virgin's are equal. The dress is so composed that her ample sleeves form pockets, falling from them flowers, creating a crown of roses about her feet, while she herself wears on her head an earthly crown of

responsibility and great weight—the Virgin has the thorns at her feet, the Elizabeth the rose; she is a mortal, bearing the emblem of the greatest earthly power on her head.

"It may be observed that all the female faces bear a family likeness; they are meant to represent individual members of the same family. The study for the heads was made from the same living being, and with the same ideal prompting—Edward the Confessor, through the type I have chosen, is an embodiment of an indulgence which I permitted myself as my own personal recompense for my labour, by portraying a suggestion of a contemporary existence of the greatest poet-painter of our era. The head is actually a portrait, and I have not thought it impertinent to dress my hero as a King in his art and a Confessor in his modesty of purpose."

JOSEPH HATTON.

Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

LIST OF WORKS EXHIBITED AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

1882. The Kiss of Victory. (Sent from Rome).
1884. Study of a Head. Bronze.
Icarus (p. 10).
1886. Cyril Flower, Esq., M.P. Bust.
The Enchanted Chair (p. 11).
M. R. Corbet, Esq. Medal (bronze).
(*Mr. Gilbert elected A.R.A.*, 1887).
1887. Post equitem sedet atra cura (p. 24).
Robert Glassby, Esq. Portrait sketch. Head.
1888. H.M. the Queen. Model of a statue erected at Winchester (p. 8).
Sketch Model for a Collar, Chain, and Badge for the Corporation of Preston (pp. 4, 5, 6).
1889. Design for Reverse and Obverse of Medal. Executed for The Art Union of London (p. 9).
J. S. Clayton, Esq. Bust.
G. F. Watts, Esq., R.A. Bust (p. 31).
1891. Henry Tate, Esq. Bust (bronze).
Daughter of Sir Dyce Duckworth, M.D. Bust (marble).
Working Model for jewel, in silver gilt and gold. Executed for The Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours (p. 23).
Victory. Statuette (silver) (p. 17).
1892. Sir George Birdwood, K.C.I.E., C.S.I. Bust.
The Late Baron Huddleston. Posthumous bust.
Chain of Office of the Corporation of Preston. Presented to the Corporation to commemorate the Jubilee of H.M. the Queen (pp. 4, 5, 6).
Comedy and Tragedy: "Sic Vita." Statuette (p. 12).
(*Mr. Gilbert elected R.A.*, 1892).
1894. Sketch Model of the Tomb of H.R.H. the late Duke of Clarence and Avondale, K.G., (to be placed) in the Memorial Chapel, Windsor.
1896. Sir Richard Owen, K.C.B., F.R.S. Bust.
Sir George Grove, D.C.L., LL.D. Bust.
St. George. Statuette (aluminium and ivory).
1897. Gold Medal, cast and chased, for annual presentation at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in memory of the late Sir William Lawrence, Bart.
Ewer and Rosewater Dish. Silver. Presented to H.R.H. the Duke of York, K.G., by the officers past and present of the Brigade of Guards (p. 22).
1898. Lionel Smythe, Esq., A.R.A. Sketch bust.
1899. Sketch Working Model for Bronze Screen at Whippingham (p. 3).
1900. Baptismal Font: In Memoriam Johannis Botteville Thynne, son of the late Marquis of Bath (p. 7).
Mrs. Henry Cust. Bust.
Thoby, son of Val. Prinsep, Esq., R.A. Head (bronze).

WORKS SHOWN IN PARIS.

1883. Salon. Perseus Arming (p. 10). Mention honorable.
1889. Exhibition. Head of an Old Man, and Icarus. Grand Prix.

WORKS NOT MENTIONED.

Memorial, in the Crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral, to Edward Robert Bulwer-Lytton, First Earl of Lytton (1830–1891).
Statue of John Bright, in Palace of Westminster.
Monument to the Earl of Pembroke, at Wilton.
Statue of Lord Reay, at Bombay.
Altar Screen, in St. Albans Abbey.

HIS ASSOCIATION WITH ARTISTIC SOCIETIES.

Honorary Member of the Royal Society of British Artists.
Honorary Member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours.
Honorary Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects.
President of the Surrey Art Circle.
On Consulting Committee of the New Gallery.
President of Sculpture Section, Liverpool Art Congress, 1888.

RANDOLPH CALDECOTT. Born at Chester 1846. Died in Florida, U.S.A., and buried there 1886.
"An artist whose sweet and dainty grace has not been in its kind surpassed, whose humour was as quaint as it was inexhaustible."

Memorial to Randolph Caldecott in the Crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral.
By Alfred Gilbert, R.A.

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